

The influence of video lectures on student  
engagement in the University of Cape Town's First  
Massive Open Online Course



Mary-Ann Fife

FFXMAR002

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master in Philosophy (Information Communication Technology in Education)

School of Education  
Faculty of Humanities  
University of Cape Town

**Supervisor:** Dr. Cheryl Brown

**Date:** 6 June 2016

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

## DECLARATION

I, Mary-Ann Fife hereby declare that the work on which this dissertation is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university.

I empower the university to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

Signature: 

Signed by candidate
---------------------

Date: 16 June 2016

## Abstract

This study set out to determine the role that video lectures played in engaging participants with different learning styles in UCT's first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), *Medicine and the Arts: Humanising Healthcare*. A framework based on Grundewald's adaptation of Kolb's Learning Model was developed in order to segment students according to their learning styles and analyse the similarities and differences in their preferences for various video production styles (e.g. talking head, location-based videos, office based videos, visually illustrative videos etc.).

Since prior research in this field has been largely quantitative to date and descriptive of behaviour but devoid of meaning, this study took a mixed methods, case study approach with the aim of studying the intent behind behaviours in MOOCs rather than the behaviour itself.

Eight Skype interviews with students who participated in the course were conducted and analysed. These interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis of this qualitative data was supported by survey data gathered at the beginning of the course (pre-course survey - 2 916 respondents), surveys conducted during each week of the course (411 responses over six weeks) as well as after the completion of the course (post-course survey - 130 respondents). All surveys were administered via electronic survey collection tools (i.e. Google Forms and Survey Monkey) and included both closed and open-ended questions. The pre- and post-course surveys were administered by FutureLearn and the surveys sent during the course were administered by the researcher. The data from the survey was analysed using mainly simple descriptive and correlation techniques as well as a cluster analysis.

One of the key findings was that MOOC participants relate to the presenters in MOOCs through the videos, and the presenter's style and approach had a strong influence on the students' engagement. In addition, while there was no definitive conclusion about the effect of learning styles on engagement, a preference for social engagement was found to be a major differentiator between the natural groupings identified by the cluster analysis conducted.

Given that this was a case study, it is recommended that the findings are tested across platforms and types of courses in order to further refine the results of this research and reduce bias.

**Key words:** MOOCs, learning styles, engagement, video

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Cheryl Brown, for her guidance and support through what was sometimes quite an overwhelming process. As an experienced researcher and someone who had sufficient knowledge of the MOOC project, her advice was both academically sound and practical. The confidence she displayed in me was sometimes much needed and always sincerely appreciated.

Thank you to all my questionnaire and interview respondents and participants. Their willingness to participate and share their experiences so openly was crucial to the completion of this thesis.

Thank you to my colleagues at the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching for the chats around the coffee machine, always showing interest in my research and providing words of encouragement. I am particularly grateful to Andrew Deacon who assisted me with some of the data analysis.

Lastly, thank you to all my friends and family for all the encouragement and special thanks to my fiancé for his patience and encouragement over the last three years.

# Table of contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Table of contents</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>List of abbreviations</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>List of tables and figures</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Tables .....	9
Figures.....	10
<b>Chapter 1 – Introduction</b> .....	<b>11</b>
1.1 Research overview .....	11
1.2 Rationale .....	12
1.3 Research question .....	16
1.4 Research design .....	16
1.5 Thesis structure .....	18
<b>Chapter 2 - Literature review</b> .....	<b>20</b>
2.1 Review of key concepts.....	20
2.1.1 <i>Video production</i> .....	20
2.1.2 <i>Engagement</i> .....	23
2.1.3 <i>Learning styles</i> .....	26
2.1.4 <i>MOOCs</i> .....	30
2.2 Review of empirical studies.....	33
2.3 Review of methodological approaches.....	35
2.4 Review of conceptual and theoretical position .....	36
2.4.1 <i>Kolb's learning styles</i> .....	37
2.4.2 <i>Framework development</i> .....	42
2.5 Chapter summary .....	43
<b>Chapter 3 – Research methodology</b> .....	<b>45</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	45
3.2 Research paradigm – an interpretivist approach .....	45
3.3 Type of research .....	46
3.4 Research approach .....	47
3.5 Methods of data collection .....	48
3.5.1 <i>Questionnaire</i> .....	50
3.5.2 <i>Interviews</i> .....	51
3.6 Selection of site and participants.....	54
3.7 Data analysis methods.....	57
3.7.1 <i>Qualitative data analysis methods</i> .....	57
3.7.2 <i>Quantitative data analysis methods</i> .....	61
3.8 Validity and ethical issues .....	62
3.9 Research procedure.....	64
3.10 Chapter summary .....	64

<b>Chapter 4 – Findings</b> .....	<b>66</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	66
4.2 Video and other elements of the course.....	66
4.2.1 <i>The importance of video</i> .....	67
4.2.2 <i>The role of other elements</i> .....	71
4.2.4 <i>Behaviour and learning styles/strategies</i> .....	77
4.3 Measuring engagement.....	82
4.4 Video production elements and engagement .....	89
4.4.1 <i>Length of video</i> .....	90
4.4.2 <i>Number of visuals</i> .....	91
4.4.3 <i>Interest in content</i> .....	92
4.4.4 <i>Presenter’s style appealing</i> .....	93
4.4.5 <i>Sound quality</i> .....	95
4.4.6 <i>Location of video</i> .....	96
4.5 Chapter summary .....	98
<b>Chapter 5 – Analysis</b> .....	<b>99</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	99
5.2 The role of video.....	99
5.3 Learning styles .....	104
5.4 Measuring engagement.....	109
5.5 Chapter summary .....	111
<b>Chapter 6 - Summary and recommendations</b> .....	<b>113</b>
6.1 Introduction .....	113
6.2 Summary of findings .....	113
6.2.1 <i>How do the videos work together with other elements of the course to engage learners with different learning styles?</i> .....	113
6.2.2 <i>Which video production elements do MOOC participants regard as important?</i> .....	115
6.2.3 <i>How do these video production elements increase engagement?</i> .....	116
6.3 Limitations of the study .....	117
6.4 Conclusion.....	119
6.5 Recommendations for future research .....	119
<b>7. References</b> .....	<b>121</b>
<b>8. Appendices</b> .....	<b>128</b>
8.1 Appendix A – Pre-course survey questions.....	128
8.2 Appendix B - Course diary questionnaire (Example – Week 2).....	130
8.3 Appendix C – Post-course survey.....	134
8.4 Appendix D – Interview script.....	136
8.5 Appendix E – Interview transcripts .....	138
8.6 Appendix F – Consent form.....	254

## List of abbreviations

AC – Abstract Conceptualisation

AE – Active Experimentation

CILT – Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching

CE – Concrete Experience

OER – Open Education Resource

MOOCs – Massive Open Online Courses

cMOOC – Particular variety of MOOC

xMOOC – Particular variety of MOOC

RO – Reflective Observation

UCT – University of Cape Town

VARK – Visual Auditory Reading/Writing Kinesthetic

VLE – Virtual Learning Environment

## List of tables and figures

### Tables

- Table 2.1. Learning style definitions (Source: Hawk & Shah, 2007)
- Table 2.2. Milestones in Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle in relation to MOOC activities (Source: Grünewald et al., 2013)
- Table 3.1. Summary of research conducted
- Table 3.2. Summary of how the research instruments relate to the research questions
- Table 3.3. Specific questions per instrument as they relate to research questions
- Table 3.4. Number of diary entry participants per week
- Table 3.5. Summary of interview participants
- Table 3.6. Interview data themes
- Table 3.7. Key words
- Table 4.1. Participants preferred ways to learn in online courses. (Source: diary entry questionnaires – 23 respondents)
- Table 4.2 Participant preferred learning styles. (Source: diary entry questionnaires)
- Table 4.3. Summary of learning preferences of interview participants. (Source: diary entry questionnaires & interviews – 8 respondents)
- Table 4.4. Data collected and rationale
- Table 4.5. Correlation of various elements with video production elements
- Table 5.1. Hansch et al.'s video affordances for online learning – alignment with interviewee responses

## Figures

- Figure 1.2.1. Interest over time by search term for “MOOC” & “Online Education” (Source: Google Trends)
- Figure 2.4.1. Kolb’s Four Stage Learning Cycle (Source: Manolis et al., 2013)
- Figure 2.4.2. Kolb’s learning styles (Source: Manolis et al., 2013)
- Figure 2.4.3. Conceptual framework
- Figure 3.1. Location of pre-course survey participants
- Figure 3.2. Interview database by Interviewee
- Figure 3.3. Interview dataset by “Content” theme
- Figure 4.1. Participants’ preferred ways to learn in online courses (Source: pre-course survey. Total = 2 916)
- Figure 4.2. Conceptual framework
- Figure 4.3. Cluster analysis – natural grouping of learning preferences. (Source: pre-course survey. Total = 2 916)
- Figure 4.4. Total engagement activity (Source: diary entry questionnaires - 411 responses)
- Figure 4.5. Example of video with prompted engagement
- Figure 4.7. Likelihood of watching videos to the end (Source: post-course survey. Total = 130)
- Figure 4.8. Likelihood of not completing video lectures (Source: post-course survey. Total = 130)
- Figure 5.1. Summary of three natural groupings and characteristics found in cluster analysis

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## 1.1 Research overview

In July 2013, I joined the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Implementation Team as a learning designer. At that time, the team was preparing to begin course production and one of my first tasks was to review the various video production elements of MOOCs and present recommendations for the free courses we were about to design. I identified many different attributes and video styles. These included, but were not limited to:

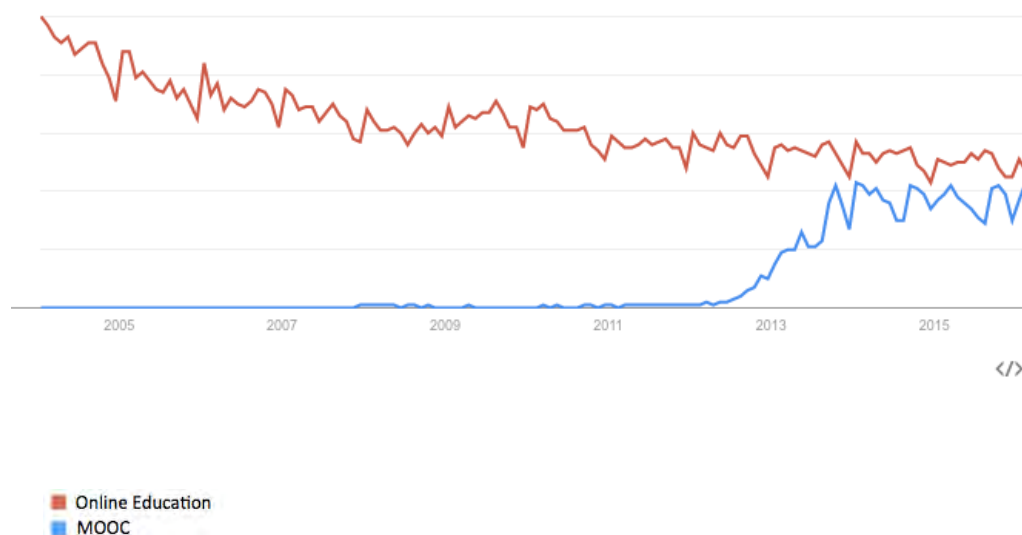
- the manner in which presenters delivered their video lectures (presenter style),
- the filming location (location), and
- the supporting video content and still images inserted into the lecture videos for illustrative purposes (supporting visuals).

What struck me first was the diversity of existing MOOC video production elements - a term I will use throughout this dissertation to describe the qualities of video lectures mentioned above. Another more remarkable observation was the varied responses of different team members to the idea of videos in MOOCs in the first place; and the differing opinions about the impact that these various video production elements might have on their learning. Some members of the team did not like to watch videos at all and preferred to read the transcripts. Others played the videos at double speed. Some took an intense disliking to what, in my opinion, were the most arbitrary elements of video, for example, being able to see the presenter's entire body; whereas others strongly preferred this approach to the traditional head-and-shoulders shot, often referred to as "the talking head".

This variability of opinion was an indication to me that video is a highly subjective field. Since video is such a major component of MOOCs and online education in general, it is important to consider the meaning behind this subjectivity. It is reasonable to infer that the question of how we engage participants on a MOOC platform can, at least in part, be answered by how video influences engagement – and that is the aim of this research project.

## 1.2 Rationale

In November 2012, *The New York Times* declared 2013 “The Year of the MOOC” in light of the rapid growth that MOOC platforms such as edX and Coursera were experiencing at the time and the potential of the medium (Pappano, 2012). Since then, MOOCs have garnered much general interest. The graph below shows how the search term, “MOOC”, increased in popularity since late 2012 – and is currently almost on par with the more general term of “Online education”.



**Figure 1.2.1. Interest over time by search term for “MOOC” & “Online Education” (Source: Google Trends)**

MOOCs typically attract scores of participants (Massive); are freely available to anyone with an internet connection; have no prerequisites (Open) (Fasihuddin, Skinner & Athauda, 2013); and are hosted on virtual learning environments (VLEs) offered by MOOC platforms such as Coursera<sup>1</sup>, edX<sup>2</sup>, FutureLearn<sup>3</sup> and Canvas<sup>4</sup> (Online). Many tertiary and other educational institutions, such as museums and international organisations, have collaborated with MOOC platform providers to deliver their courses (or versions thereof) openly. Coursera alone has 157 partners thus far – with roughly a 50/50 split between local (United States) and international institutions (Coursera, 2016).

Despite the recent hype, MOOCs have not been without criticism (Guo & Reinecke, 2014; Vu & Fadde, 2014). Authors such as Guo and Reinecke (2014) have, in particular, criticised xMOOCs, which rely heavily on content delivery through a series of short video lectures, for failing to improve higher education in any way. They are said to perpetuate the didactic, "sage-on-the-stage" model of large university classes, which many argue, do not support real, deep engagement and ultimately, learning (Guo & Reinecke, 2014). In fact, others go further and claim that MOOCs may be detrimental to the learning process and that MOOC producers are performing reckless experiments at the expense of unsuspecting students (Rivard, 2013 as cited by Vu & Fadde, 2014).

This study makes no case for or against MOOCs. It accepts that higher education institutions will continue to produce them despite the controversy they face, and if this is the case, then MOOC designers must aim to develop pedagogically sound courses in a resource-efficient manner. Regardless of the merit of the medium, MOOC developers have been forging ahead. The growth of FutureLearn's partner base in their debut year from zero to 40

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org)

<sup>2</sup> [www.edX.org](http://www.edX.org)

<sup>3</sup> [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)

<sup>4</sup> [www.canvas.net](http://www.canvas.net)

(FutureLearn, 2014) is a testament to universities' eagerness to produce these short courses.

In keeping with this global trend, and as the top-ranked university in Africa (TES Global Ltd, 2014), the University of Cape Town (UCT) wished to assert this position and put Africa on the map by showcasing the world-class teaching, research and knowledge generated by the institution. The University's first MOOC, situated in the interdisciplinary field of the Medical Humanities entitled *Medicine and the Arts: Humanising Healthcare* launched in March 2015 on the FutureLearn Platform and was the context for this study.

Being a leader in a developing world context means being the first to do things, but it also comes with the responsibility of bearing risks and sharing learning so that others may learn from one's mistakes. A fair criticism of MOOCs is that, although they are "open" or free to the general public, they are by no means free to produce. The expense of the medium is particularly concerning in a resource-scarce environment that stretches both people and budgets.

The costs of producing a MOOC includes, among other things, the opportunity cost of distracting the MOOC's lead academics from their ordinary teaching load, consultation with a learning design team and the actual cost of producing the videos. The video production can be quite a sizable portion of the cost of producing a MOOC, but this depends heavily on decisions made by the MOOC production team. The production value ranges from, on the one hand, high definition, studio recorded videos, interspersed with animated illustrations and requiring extensive post-production or editing work and specialised skills, to, on the other hand, a simple, webcam recording using a very basic laptop with inexpensive software.

But what difference does the production value make to the viewer regarding learning and engagement? Moreover, are there elements of video, as suggested by various studies conducted by Guo et al. (2014), that are more important than others in engaging MOOC participants with the content of the course? If this is the case, then MOOC producers should surely focus their energy and resources on the elements of video that make a difference to a student's engagement and ultimately, learning. In a developing country context, with limited resources, the question of cost-effectiveness is an important one should a university wish to sustain their production of MOOCs and online courses over an extended period.

This study acknowledges that the video lecture is only one element of a MOOC. Other components include readings, quizzes, assignments, engagement in discussion forums, learning groups and more (Grünewald et al., 2013). However, given the cost and centrality of video as a medium to particularly, xMOOCs, it was singled out as possibly having a significant relative impact, both pedagogically and from a financial perspective.

The primary outcome of this research is to provide UCT with recommendations as to the role and value of different video production elements for learners in MOOCs. However, according to Graf, Liut and Kinshuk (2010), because of the flexible nature of the online learning environment, individuals navigate the content differently. This study, therefore, acknowledged that learners in MOOCs may have different learning styles or preferences for learning within the context of the MOOC and set out to use Grünewald et al.'s (2013) adaptation of Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning to interrogate this. In this way, the subjectivity of the individual's experience in a MOOC was taken into consideration and built into the focus of the study.

### 1.3 Research question

The research focuses on the link between video production, engagement and different learning styles within MOOCs. Although not extensive or comprehensive, research has already been conducted in this domain, and the relationships between these concepts have, to some extent, been examined (Guo, Kim & Rubin, 2014; Grunewald et al., 2013). However, the studies mentioned above were inadequate in addressing the underlying meaning behind the behaviour they recorded, and this is the gap that this study aims to address. The purpose of this research is to explain comprehensively, using both quantitative and qualitative data, how video production elements affect engagement in participants with different learning styles in the context of a MOOC. The main research question is:

What is the role of lecture videos in MOOCs in engaging participants with different learning styles?

The following secondary questions support the main research question:

- How do the videos work together with other elements of the course to engage learners with different learning styles?
- Which video production elements do MOOC participants regard as important?
- How do these video production elements increase engagement?

### 1.4 Research design

The context for this research was the *Medicine and the Arts* MOOC which ran between 16 March and 26 April 2015 on the FutureLearn Platform, with 8 155 registrations.

As stated above, the aim of this investigation is to understand what engages MOOC participants with different learning styles and the role that the medium

of video plays in engaging these participants. Many of the studies reviewed take a quantitative approach (Guo & Reinecke, 2014; Aguiar, Nagrecha & Chawla, 2014; Wang et al., 2013; Vieira, Lopes & Soares, 2014; Kim et al., 2014). This approach is useful for generalising but is not compatible with obtaining an in-depth understanding of the matter.

Guo et al. (2013), for example, tried to measure engagement using the log data from the edX platform. However, using a purely quantitative approach strips the study of its context resulting in a loss of meaning. The ultimate aim of this research is to formulate a set of recommendations for UCT's next phase of MOOCs. To do this, a deeper, more meaningful understanding, facilitated by a qualitative approach, is necessary.

The recommendations coming out of this study will also be applicable beyond UCT and beyond the context of a MOOC. It may also serve sectors of the broader educational community who are grappling with the question of how best to utilise the medium of video in varying educational contexts, namely, distance learning, online short courses, blended learning and flipped classroom scenarios.

The research adopts the ontological perspective that reality is subjective or that "the social world can be understood only from the standpoint of the individuals" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:19). This approach is known as an anti-positivist or interpretivist paradigm.

The aim of the research, described above, also fits the definition of a case study, which, according to Hartley (2011:324), "consists of a detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena, in their context. The aim is to provide an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues being studied". This research, therefore, adopted a case study approach and incorporated qualitative

methods to understand and explain how video production influences engagement in MOOCs.

The main research instruments were:

- **Questionnaires** with the aim of obtaining a general view of video preferences
- **Interviews** for gaining in-depth insight into participants' preferences and the reasons for their behaviour in MOOCs

## 1.5 Thesis structure

This dissertation is structured as follows:

**Chapter 1** provided an overview of the research including a rationale for the research and a summary of the research question and design.

**Chapter 2** begins with a definition and discussion of the key concepts of this study. Some empirical studies, methodological approaches and theoretical positions of similar investigations are then reviewed and critically evaluated to justify this study's approach.

**Chapter 3** outlines the research orientation, types of research and research approach that were adopted. A rationale for the site and participant selection is provided, the methods of data collection and analysis are clearly defined, and issues of validity and ethics are briefly discussed. Finally, a summary of the research procedure and the chapter is provided.

**Chapter 4** summarises the research findings by contextualising video in terms of the other elements of online courses and emphasises the importance of the medium of video in these types of courses. The learning styles framework is then discussed and an alternative categorisation to learning styles based on

the analysis is proposed. The final section of this chapter deals with the different elements of videos and their relationship with engagement.

**Chapter 5** commences with an analysis of the role of video in MOOCs, comparing the results of the research conducted with the current literature on the pedagogical affordances of video. The natural grouping of learners revealed by the cluster analysis is then discussed as an alternative to thinking about how the role of video in MOOCs might differ for students with different learning styles. The final section of this chapter deals with the relationship between engagement and the elements of video identified in the previous chapter (i.e. presenter's style, content, inclusion of visuals, video length, video quality, sound quality and video location).

**Chapter 6** concludes the thesis and provides a list of recommendations for the UCT MOOC implementation team and more broadly, MOOC designers.

## Chapter 2 - Literature review

The literature review provides the theoretical grounding for the core concepts of this study, positions the study against existing research and justifies the theoretical position that informed the data collection process and methods. This chapter develops a conceptual framework adapted from Kolb's Experiential Learning Styles Model and motivates for its utilisation in this study.

After beginning with definitions of the key concepts, the following sections review empirical studies, methodological approaches and theoretical positions of similar investigations and critically evaluate them to justify this study's approach.

### 2.1 Review of key concepts

The following concepts are crucial to this study and are discussed to clarify the definition of these terms in the context of this research: video production, engagement, learning styles and MOOCs.

#### 2.1.1 Video production

Video production refers quite simply to the process of producing a video. In this paper, video production relates to the qualities of the final product (video lecture) as a result of specific inputs and decisions made during the production process. For example, the decision to create a high definition, studio-recorded video lecture as opposed to a webcam recording in an office.

The medium of video allows for the presentation of content in a consistent and visually appealing way (Zhang et al., 2006) and is particularly beneficial in an educational context because it allows students to perceive realistic audio-visual representations of objects, scenes and events (Zhang et al., 2006). Although video-use for educational purposes is not exclusive to MOOCs and

has been in existence since the 1970s (SMART Technologies EMEA, 2011), videos are of particular importance in MOOCs because they are the primary method of content delivery for most xMOOCs (Crowley, 2013). It is for this reason that the role of the video is of particular pedagogical interest.

Guo, in collaboration with other researchers, has written several papers on how video production affects the efficacy of a MOOC (Guo et al., 2014; Guo & Reinicke, 2014; Kim et al., 2014) and refers to several different aspects of video production (Guo et al., 2014):

- **Video length:** Shorter videos (under six minutes) seem to be more engaging than longer videos.
- **Video type:** They make a distinction between lecture videos, tutorial videos and summary videos, as they seem to be used differently by MOOC participants.
- **Presentation style:** Examples include voice-over slides, talking head or a combination of these two. Moreover, if it is a combination, how the slides are interspersed with the talk.
- **Production value:** The position of the video on the continuum from low production value, e.g. filmed in the lecturer's office on a webcam, to high production value, e.g. incorporating a studio environment, location shoots, animation to illustrate concepts and requiring extensive post-production work/editing.
- **Speaking rates and tone:** Does the presenter speak quickly or slowly, and in an enthusiastic or monotonous tone?
- **Preproduction:** How much planning went into the production of the video?

There are two different types of qualities here: qualities of the video itself (e.g. video length, video type, production value and pre-production) and qualities

relating to the presentation and/or presenter (e.g. presentation style and speaking rates). Both these categories of qualities will feature in this study and will be added to through a further review of the literature, as well as by examining the actual videos in the MOOC being studied.

In addition to Guo et al.'s research, in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of high-quality videos, Hansch et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study. They surveyed leading producers of online courses, interview practitioners and experts in the field of online lecture video production. Their primary finding was that, while producers of MOOCs often aim to produce MOOC video lectures of television-quality standards, there is no evidence to suggest that these videos are more suited to learning and engagement than lower quality videos. They go further to recommend considering do-it-yourself approaches to video production.

Furthermore, Hansch et al. (2015) introduce nine affordances of video and caution against using the medium of video in online courses when the pedagogical requirements of the material do not match these affordances. They are listed below:

- **Building rapport:** establishing an emotional connection between the presenter and the audience
- **Virtual field trips:** providing the audience with access to people and places they would not have access to otherwise
- **Manipulating time and space:** the ability to show micro and macro views as well as slow motion
- **Telling stories:** captivating viewers and taking them on a journey
- **Motivating learners:** stimulating appetite to learn by conveying enthusiasm
- **Historical footage:** bringing the past to life

- **Demonstrations:** showing experiments and psychomotor skills
- **Visual juxtaposition:** creating meaning through contrasting concepts
- **Multimedia presentation:** combining audio-visual elements

Both Guo et al. (2014) and Hansch et al.'s (2015) research indicates that all these factors have an effect on participant engagement, which is a necessary prerequisite for learning (Guo et al., 2014). The concept of engagement is discussed in detail below.

### 2.1.2 Engagement

According to the Glossary of Education Reform, student engagement refers to “the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught” (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). By this definition, the concept of engagement is clearly a multi-dimensional one, and according to Guo et al. (2014), is only truly measurable via direct observation and interviewing.

Although difficult to measure, it is important to study engagement for many reasons. The primary reason for the focus on engagement in this study is that it is a necessary condition for real, deep learning to occur (Guo et al., 2014; Dixson, 2010). It, therefore, stands to reason that factors that improve engagement have the potential to positively influence learning, and should be taken into account in the learning design process to improve the effectiveness of MOOCs. Also, these lessons learnt about engagement in a MOOC environment may be applicable in other contexts as well, including brick-and-mortar classrooms (Ramesh et al., 2014).

While engagement can only be directly measured by observation and interviews, unfortunately, in a MOOC or online course environment, it is not always feasible to do this. Therefore, in the studies reviewed, behavioural

metrics are used as a proxy for engagement (Guo et al., 2014; Trumbore, 2014; Coffrin et al., 2014; Perna et al., 2013). Current studies are measuring engagement with video material in similar but nuanced ways:

- Guo et al. (2014) conducted a large-scale study using log data from four edX courses (MOOCs) and 6.9 million video-watching sessions. Time spent watching a video and whether or not participants attempted the quiz immediately following the video lecture were used as a proxy for engagement.
- Trumbore (2014) studied MOOCs on the NovoEd social online learning environment and aimed to identify the design elements that contribute to student persistence or engagement. She identified engaged students as those who were interested, motivated and capable of submitting the initial assignment and stressed the importance of using this denominator to calculate completion rates as opposed to the number of enrolments.
- Coffrin et al. (2014) studied temporal engagement in two MOOCs namely Principles of Economics and Discrete Optimization. They distinguished between students who watched videos but did not complete any of the assignments (Auditors), students who participated in an assignment in any given week (Active) and students who met the qualifying criteria based on their grades in the first two weeks of assignments (Qualified). Engagement for these different groups was measured using visual methods, with similarities in the patterns of the two courses being noted.
- Perna et al. (2013) looked at a million MOOC participants in the first 17 University of Pennsylvania MOOCs on the Coursera platform. Similar to Trumbore (2014) and Coffrin et al. (2014), they used persistence as a proxy for engagement. Specifically, whether the participant had watched the lectures, taken the quizzes, obtained a grade of above 80% and accessed the course regularly.

- Ramesh et al. (2014) use data from a number of MOOCs to model student survival (or completion) based on their behaviour on the course. They differentiate between active and passive engagement. Active engagement means that they participate in the community via, for example, discussion forums, and passive being that they watch videos, complete assignments and or read discussion posts by other participants but do not engage socially.

These metrics are all quite similar. The literature suggests that participation (evidence that MOOC learners are engaging with the content) and, to a lesser extent, interaction (evidence that MOOC learners are engaging with one another) are fair proxies for engagement (Guo et al. 2014; Trumbore, 2014; Coffrin et al., 2014, Perna et al., 2013 and Ramesh et al., 2014). However, because the data is machine generated, it may be difficult to interpret, or contain errors. For example, in Guo et al.'s (2014) study, time spent watching the video is measured by how long the video runs according to the logs of the learning management system. This inaccuracy threatens the integrity of the data because the researchers are unable to distinguish between when a participant idly left the video running and when they were actively viewing the video.

An additional point regarding engagement is that it is likely to be somewhat subjective. This became apparent when UCT's MOOC implementation team evaluated a number of different styles of lecture videos from various MOOCs. Various members of the team preferred different kinds of videos and elements within those videos. But what accounts for this variation? For the purpose of narrowing the focus, and because the videos in question are educational in nature, it made sense to try to analyse these apparent differences in what engages people, by the differences in the ways in which people learn – in other words, their learning styles or learning preferences.

### 2.1.3 Learning styles

A study conducted by Graf et al. (2010) found that individuals with different learning styles navigate online learning platforms differently. This supports the notion that learning style as a variable could be a possible differentiating factor for individual preferences in a MOOC. However, with the plethora of learning style models available, how does one go about selecting an appropriate model for any particular study?

Learning styles are defined as “the ways in which individuals characteristically approach different learning tasks” Hartley (1998 as cited in Dixson, 2010:421). However, each learning style model has a slightly nuanced definition of learning and learning styles (Hawk & Shah, 2007):

**Table 2.1. Learning style definitions (Source: Hawk & Shah, 2007)**

	<b>Model</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Learning Style Definition</b>
1	Kolb's Experiential Learning Model	Kolb, 1984:76 in Hawk & Shah, 2007	"generalized differences in learning orientation based on the degree to which people emphasise the four modes of the learning process"
2	Gregorc Learning Style Model	Gregorc & Ward, 1979:19 in Hawk & Shah, 2007	"distinctive and observable behaviours that provide clues about the mediation abilities of individuals and how their minds relate to the world and therefore how they learn"
3	VARC Model (Visual /Auditory / Reading-Writing /Kinesthetic)	Fleming, 2001:1 in Hawk & Shah, 2007	"an individual's characteristics and preferred ways of gathering, organizing and thinking about information"
4	Felder-Silverman Learning/Teaching Style Model	Felder & Silverman, 1988:674 in Hawk & Shah, 2007	"the characteristic strengths and preferences in the ways individuals take in and process information"
5	Dunn and Dunn Learning Style Model	Dunn, 1990:353 in Hawk & Shah, 2007	"the way in which individuals begin to concentrate on, process, internalize, and retain new and difficult information"

The table above suggests possible variation in the ways in which each of these authors think about learning styles. For example, the Felder-Silverman model talks about "preferences" which suggest that people select their learning styles, whereas Gregorc's definition looks to behaviour as a clue to explaining individuals' learning styles – suggesting that observation rather than self-reporting might give the researcher a more accurate view. This implies that the authors of the varying learning style models may have differing ontological perspectives, making it problematic to compare their approaches without doing an in-depth study.

In a recent overview of learning styles, Dixson (2010) mentions 23 different learning style models. A very brief summary of some of the most popular models is listed below:

- **Neil Fleming's VARK model** categorises learners as either predominantly visual, auditory, reading/writing-preferenced or kinesthetic. Learners may have one or more dominant styles (Dixson, 2010).
- **Felder and Silverman's Index of Learning Styles** has five dimensions: perception: sensory/intuitive; input: visual/verbal; organisation: Inductive /deductive; processing: active/reflective; understanding: sequential/global (Dixson, 2010)
- **Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning** describes the process of learning and categorises learners according to the principal focus areas of the matrix (see Table 2.2 below) (Dixson, 2010)

This study used Kolb's theory of experiential learning for the following two reasons:

- Its prevalence in the literature: According to Desmedt and Valcke (2004) Kolb is the most cited author on the topic of learning styles.
- According to Grünewald et al. (2013), Kolb's framework is compatible with the elements of a MOOC, since the typical activities of MOOCs relate to each of the milestones in Kolb's experiential learning process: concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualisation (AC) and active experimentation (AE)

**Table 2.2. Milestones in Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle in relation to MOOC activities (Source: Grünewald et al., 2013)**

Milestones in Experiential Learning Cycle	MOOC Activities
Concrete Experience	Discussions; Quizzes
Reflective Observation	Lecture videos
Abstract Conceptualisation	Readings
Active Experimentation	Peer review assignments

A study conducted by Komarraju et al. (2011) investigated which learning styles and personality traits were linked to achievement. Three hundred and eight college undergraduate students completed Five Factor Inventory and Inventory of Learning Processes questionnaires and then reported their grade point average. Their finding was that learning styles explained 3% of the variance in grade point average (and perhaps learning). Since learning can be positively linked to engagement (Guo et al., 2014; Dixson, 2010), it is plausible that learning styles may also affect engagement.

However, this study aims to determine not only if learning styles affect engagement, but also how engagement varies among students with different learning styles, specifically in the context of a MOOC. Grünewald et al. (2013) have also used learning styles – in fact, Kolb’s model – to demonstrate the levels of importance of the different elements of a MOOC for people with different learning styles. This supports the relevance of the use of learning styles in MOOC-related research. Grünewald’s model was used in the development of the conceptual framework detailed in section 2.4.2 below.

Given all the possible factors that could be related to students’ engagement with a MOOC video lecture, learning styles provided a good starting point.

#### 2.1.4 MOOCs

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are courses “aimed at large-scale participation and open access via the web” (Littlejohn, 2013:2). They have emerged in response to a changing higher education landscape. This landscape is characterised by, among other things: the rise of the open education resource (OER) movement; tertiary institutions wanting to showcase their teaching and research; and increased access to high-speed internet connections. Participation is voluntary, and so the participant cohort comprises a self-motivated group of students interested in the subject on offer. While this paints a broad outline, the term is unpacked in more detail below.

**Massive:** The term, massive, is relative, but refers to the fact that MOOC platforms cater for a vast number of participants. One MOOC has exceeded 380 000 registrations (Parr, 2015). Massive in the broader sense also refers to the massive amount of data that MOOCs produce, enabling researchers to do large-scale studies focusing on how MOOC participants learn in an online environment. Some of these findings can be extrapolated to other forms of online learning as well.

**Open:** Openness refers to the fact that there are no fees or entry requirements, and anyone with an Internet connection can access the course content. Open can also be more widely interpreted to refer to open content sometimes found in MOOCs, issued under a Creative Commons licence. This licence gives anyone the right to copy, distribute and display the content, provided they adhere to the author’s stipulations about attribution and conditions for sharing.

**Online:** To fit the requirement of a MOOC, the course must be delivered solely on an online platform. MOOC platforms provide hosting environments for institutions or individuals to upload their courses. The major English-

medium MOOC platform providers are Coursera, edX, Canvas and FutureLearn. However, there is a multitude of smaller platforms. Each platform has its own business model, and they vary regarding specific functional capabilities, but most allow for interactive features such as online discussion forums facilitating peer-to-peer discussions, access to video and audio lectures and other course material.

**Course:** MOOCs differ from other online resources. They fit the definition of a course in the sense that they are focused on a particular area of study and have a specific set of learning outcomes. They are often, but not always, time-bound, with a specified start and end date. Some MOOCs (for example Coursera's 'self-paced' courses) allow participants to take the MOOC at a time that is convenient for them and at their own pace.

Fasihuddin et al. (2013), in their paper about introducing learning theories to enhance online learning, cited a number of benefits and limitation of MOOCs. These are listed below with additional evidence to reinforce the benefits:

**Benefits:**

- **Massiveness:** MOOCs are scalable to numbers even larger than 100 000 as seen in recent courses such as edX's "The Science of Happiness" (The Positive Psychlopedia, 2014) and Coursera's "Learning to Learn" (Coursera, 2014).
- **Openness:** To learners, one of the greatest benefits is the open (free) access to university level content on a wide variety of subjects.
- **Learner-centred:** Also, MOOCs allow learners to be the architect of their individual learning experience. While MOOCs (particularly xMOOCs as discussed below) provide a guided pathway for participants to follow, participants are not compelled to follow the

recommended path and therefore only need to complete the activities that they feel will benefit them or for which they have time.

**Limitations:**

- **Pacing:** Although students have some flexibility regarding when they choose to view materials and complete activities in the MOOC, they are constrained by set deadlines for assignments and quizzes if they wish to receive a certificate of participation.
- **Completion not certified:** Although participants receive a certificate of completion, the University does not formally accredit completion of the MOOC. This lack of accreditation affects participants' motivation to complete the course.
- **Limited interaction:** The study of some subject areas, particularly humanities subjects, are based largely on discussion and dialogue. Although MOOCs typically allow for discussion forums/spaces, interactivity between participants and course creators, this is limited due to the sheer numbers.
- **Identity authentication:** This is limited, given the fact that courses are taken online. However, there has been an attempt to verify students by computer-assisted face recognition and typing patterns (Coursera, 2014) and physical examination centres (FutureLearn, 2014).

There are two main categories of MOOCs: xMOOCs and cMOOCs. cMOOCs are underpinned by a connectivist pedagogy (Littlejohn, 2013) where participants are encouraged not only to consume content and interact with other participants but also to produce content and contribute resources to the course. xMOOCs, on the other hand, are more instructivist in their nature and guide participants through a learning path with pre-defined learning outcomes and objectives (Littlejohn, 2013).

## 2.2 Review of empirical studies

A review of a number of empirical studies (Guo, et al., 2014; Guo & Reinecke, 2014; Aguiar et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2013; Vieira et al., 2014; Grünewald et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2014; Murray, 2014) reveals that no recent research deals directly with the role of video in MOOCs in engaging individuals with different learning styles. The review was therefore conducted on a broader level, looking at participant perceptions of MOOCs, predicting participant behaviour within MOOCs and designing MOOCs that lead to better learning outcomes:

- Predicting MOOC participant behaviour (Aguiar et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2013)
- Measuring MOOC participant perceptions (Murray, 2014)
- Using one of the above to make design recommendations that lead to better learning outcomes (Guo et al., 2014; Guo & Reinecke, 2014; Wang et al., 2013; Grünewald et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2014)

These three aspects are all important. One has to understand perceptions and behaviour to enhance the design of MOOCs; however it was this connection between understanding perceptions and behaviour and making design recommendations that was felt to be lacking in the empirical studies reviewed. The majority of these studies focused on monitoring behaviour through quantitative methods rather than understanding behaviour through qualitative methods.

The remainder of this section critically discusses the main empirical studies mentioned above and how this study drew on and learned from them.

Guo et al. have written several papers based on studies performed on a data set obtained from the first four edX MOOCs. The first of these studies (Guo et al. 2014) looks at the effectiveness of various video production elements

including video length, presenter speaking rate, video type (lecture/tutorial) and production style (slides only, code, classroom lecture recording, khan-style tab-casting, studio recording and office desk). The main findings were:

- Shorter videos were more engaging based on the fact that they were watched to the end more frequently.
- Talking heads interspersed with slides were more engaging than only slides with voice-over.
- Videos that have a more personal feel could be more engaging than high quality, studio-produced videos.
- Khan-style tutorial videos are more engaging than screencasts or PowerPoint slides.
- Classroom lectures are not engaging when repurposed as MOOC video lectures.
- Videos, where instructors spoke quickly and enthusiastically, were more engaging.

The other studies based on the same data also looked at the behaviour of MOOC participants, but from a different perspective. Guo and Reinecke (2014) looked at the differences between the demographic profiles and how they navigate through MOOCs, looking specifically at metrics such as age, student-teacher ratio in the country of residence, gender, country of origin and number of years of education. It was found that older students and those from countries with a lower student-teacher ratio navigated through MOOCs in a less linear fashion and younger participants from countries with a higher student-teacher ratio navigated the MOOC in a more linear fashion. The authors concluded that participants from wealthier countries are more likely to fall into the “leisure learner” category whereas participants from developing countries are doing MOOCs more seriously for transitioning between stages of education (e.g. high school to university or undergraduate to post-graduate studies) or for professional development purposes. There was no attempt to back up the quantitative data with any form of qualitative study. While the

current study does not focus on demographics, the data were examined for any noteworthy findings.

Kim et al. (2014) looked at dropout patterns and interaction peaks and found that dropouts occurred more frequently in longer videos, when participants were re-watching the videos and during tutorials as opposed to lecture videos. In the current study, dropout patterns were analysed as a measure of disengagement, but the study placed more emphasis on understanding dropouts rather than logging when they occurred and with which events they coincided.

Another study worth mentioning is by Grünewald et al. (2013). They take a somewhat theoretical approach by adapting Kolb's learning styles framework to fit the context of a MOOC (see Figure 2.4.1). They mention which learning styles MOOCs best suit (Accommodating) but do not confirm this by using evidence from the survey conducted where they measured participant satisfaction with the various elements of a MOOC. This current study attempted to use both Kolb's learning styles framework and Grünewald's adaptation thereof to show how MOOC participants are distributed across the matrix (see figure 2.4.1 below).

### **2.3 Review of methodological approaches**

Most of the studies used a quantitative or mixed methods rather than qualitative approach:

- Quantitative: Guo and Reinecke (2014); Aguiar et al. (2014); Wang et al. (2013); Vieira et al. (2014); Kim et al. (2014)
- Qualitative: Murray (2014)
- Mixed methods: Guo et al. (2014); Grünewald et al. (2013)

There was a strong emphasis on quantitative methods across the studies reviewed. However, in general, in a previous study I conducted, I found that the most comprehensive studies seem to take a mixed method approach. These studies incorporate a literature review, quantitative study, qualitative methods (such as interviews or focus groups or a combination of these) and/or a survey (Keengwe & Kang, 2011; Mørch et al., 2008; Worrall et al., 2010; Shari & Soebarto, 2012; McDonnell & Hayden, 2012). This makes sense because, in order to make design recommendations, one has to be able to monitor and understand both behaviour and perceptions. Monitoring behaviour alone (characterised by a quantitative dataset) might lead the researcher to make false assumptions, and purely attempting to understand perceptions (characterised by a qualitative study) might be difficult to achieve given the smaller sample typical of qualitative research.

This present study focuses on trying to understand the engagement levels of MOOC participants. The intention is to learn about the behaviour of participants with different learning styles (pre-course questionnaire and course logs), observe and understand their behaviour (course diaries and interviews), and understand what elements of video production they deem useful and therefore, which elements need to be adapted in order to accommodate different learning styles. As alluded to, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to monitor and understand participant behaviour.

## **2.4 Review of conceptual and theoretical position**

In the words of Lewin (1951), “[t]here is nothing as practical as a good theory” (in Howard & Maton, 2011:205). Theory is an important part of research for a number of reasons. Maton and Moore (2010 in Howard & Maton, 2011:191) assert that intellectual fields that lack the backing of theory to support empirical research risk repetition and stagnation.

Bennett and Oliver (2011) claim that research in the field of educational technology has been overly focused on practical aspects and has neglected the use of theory. They go on to state that, when theory is incorporated into an empirical study, it is merely applied; but there are other uses of theory necessary to advance the field (Bennett & Oliver, 2011:182) e.g.:

- Empirical studies can develop theories.
- Theories backed by evidence can undermine previously made claims, thereby changing the way we do things.
- Theory can change the way phenomena are understood.

Furthermore, Bennett and Oliver give examples of how this was done using three separate cases. However, developing a theory is not within the scope of this mini-dissertation. The above was mentioned simply to highlight the importance of theory and advocate for the use of theory to support empirical claims. The section below justifies the theoretical position for this research.

MOOC research has drawn from a range of conceptual and theoretical frameworks and no dominant theories have surfaced from the research reviewed. However, because of its application to online learning, this study adopted Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning as a framework for the research. The following section explains the development of the conceptual framework as adapted from Kolb's model. Although this model was not used in the end as the basis for analysing the data, due to an incompatibility with the data collected, the rationale for the intention behind the use of this framework is explained below.

#### **2.4.1 Kolb's learning styles**

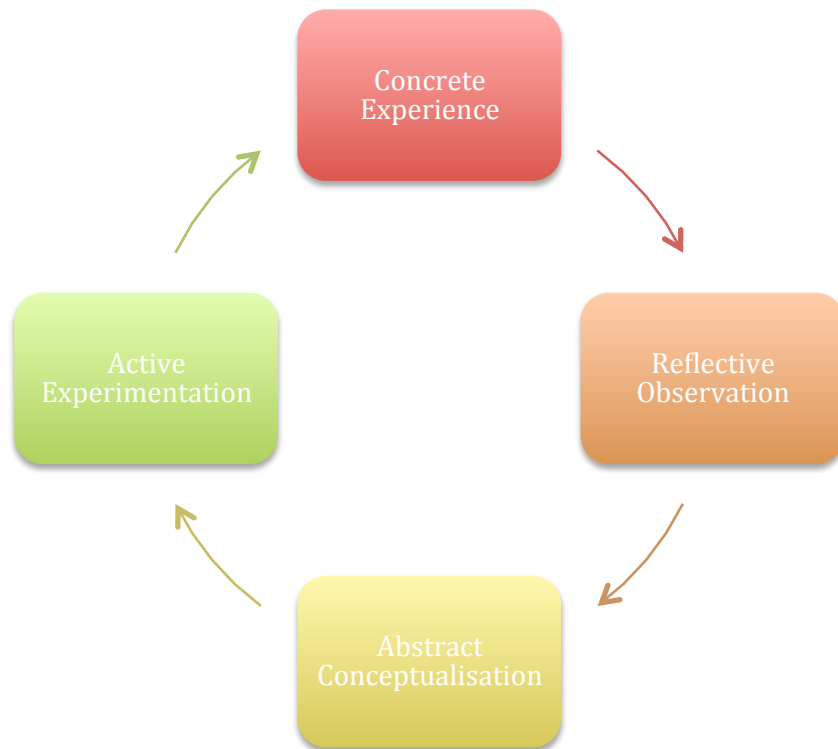
As mentioned above, Kolb's Experiential Learning Styles framework was used as a base conceptual framework for this study due to its prevalence in the literature and compatibility with the MOOC environment. This section

discusses Kolb's Model in more detail before developing the conceptual framework intended for use in analysing the data.

According to Kolb, "[l]earning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984:38 in Manolis et al., 2013). Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory operates on two levels. Firstly, it describes the learning process, which consists of the following elements (Manolis et al., 2013):

- Concrete Experience (CE): A new experience is encountered.
- Reflective Observation (RO): Reflection on the new experience and reconciling experience with understanding
- Abstract Conceptualisation (AC): Reflection gives rise to the formation of an abstract concept
- Active Experimentation (AE): This new concept or learning is tested in the real world

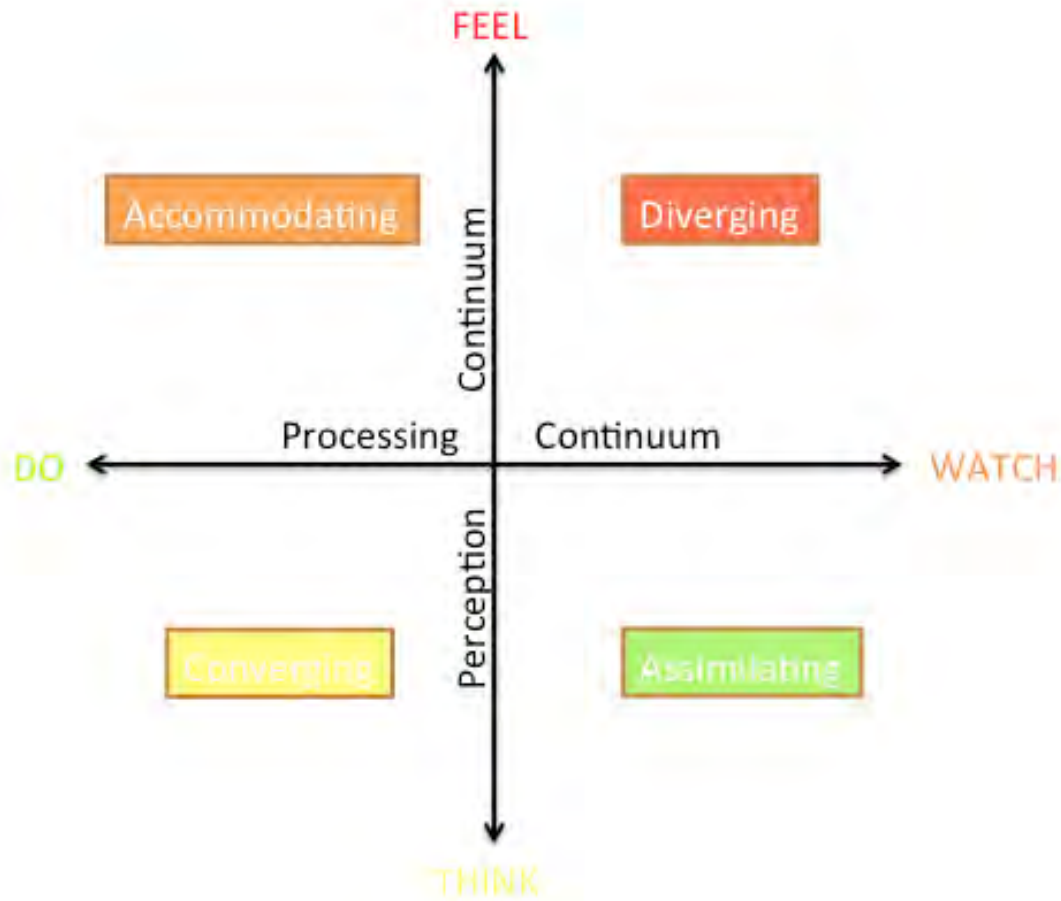
Learners may enter the cycle at any point, but according to Kolb, learning only occurs when all four stages of the model have been executed (Manolis et al., 2013).



**Figure 2.4.1. Kolb's Four Stage Learning Cycle (Source: Manolis et al., 2013)**

On the second level, Kolb's Learning Model represents four learning styles. These styles are a function of, on the one hand, how we process information, and on the other hand, how we perceive information. He represented these as a set of continua/axes. On the horizontal axis – information processing – he placed doing on the one end and watching on the other end. On the vertical axis, he placed feeling on the top end and thinking on the bottom end. The four learning styles emerge as a combination of an individual's preferred method of perceiving and processing information. These are:

- Diverging: a preference for feeling and watching
- Assimilating: a preference for thinking and watching
- Converging: a preference for thinking and doing
- Accommodating: a preference for feeling and doing



**Figure 2.4.2. Kolb's learning styles (Source: Manolis et al., 2013)**

Although the most cited author on the topic of learning styles (Desmedt & Valcke, 2004), Kolb's work has not gone uncriticised. Criticisms include the issue that Kolb aligns his theory with Jung's personality types, claiming that his learning styles are synonymous with Jung's types (Garner, 2000). According to Garner (2000), the intention of this alignment is to pass the academic weight of Jung's work on to Kolb's own work, but the links are obscure.

It is impossible to talk about learning styles without entering into the "state" or "trait" debate, which argues whether a learning style is a state that is changeable or a trait that is fixed. According to Kolb, his styles are "stable states" which means that the styles he proposes are stable but changeable. He also claims that these states are context-specific. However, Tyler's

concept of possibility processing is also incorporated into Kolb's work which states that the learning style, which yields the best results, becomes the dominant one through a process of programming. This means that although a learning style is changeable, it is difficult to change. The two points seem to be in conflict with one another, and this inconsistency, according to Garner (2000), is concerning.

On the other hand, there are also studies that validate Kolb's approach. Manolis et al. (2013) validate Kolb's framework and claim that it is the most important learning style model (Kayes, 2005 in Manolis et al., 2013). This, coupled with the fact that it is the most widely used theory, provided a level of confidence in using it as the basis for the conceptual framework. Although not clear in the literature, for this study, Kolb's framework was understood to be a contextual one, i.e. for the context of the MOOC. The intent was not to label individuals with particular learning styles, but rather to describe their learning style in the context of the *Medicine and the Arts* MOOC.

Grünewald et al. (2013) conducted a survey to determine how MOOCs can accommodate different learning styles to incorporate this feedback into the design of these courses. They used Kolb's learning styles theory as a basis and concluded that xMOOCs are primarily suited to the Assimilating learning style due to the type of content found in xMOOCs, namely, videos, quizzes and readings. They suggested that xMOOCs incorporate other types of activities found in cMOOCs to accommodate all types of learning. Specifically, Grünewald et al. (2013) suggest:

- **Accommodating:** practical exercises that require learners to draw on their experience
- **Diverging:** encouraging learners to discuss topics related to but not directly covered by the course material.
- **Assimilating:** incorporating well-presented and consistent quality course material into the course

- **Converging:** including visualisations, simulations and experiments

Since the *Medicine and the Arts* MOOC includes many of these elements, Grünewald et al.'s (2013) model was adapted for incorporation into the framework for analysing the data for this study. The following section details the development of the theoretical framework.

#### 2.4.2 Framework development

In essence, the study aims to establish:

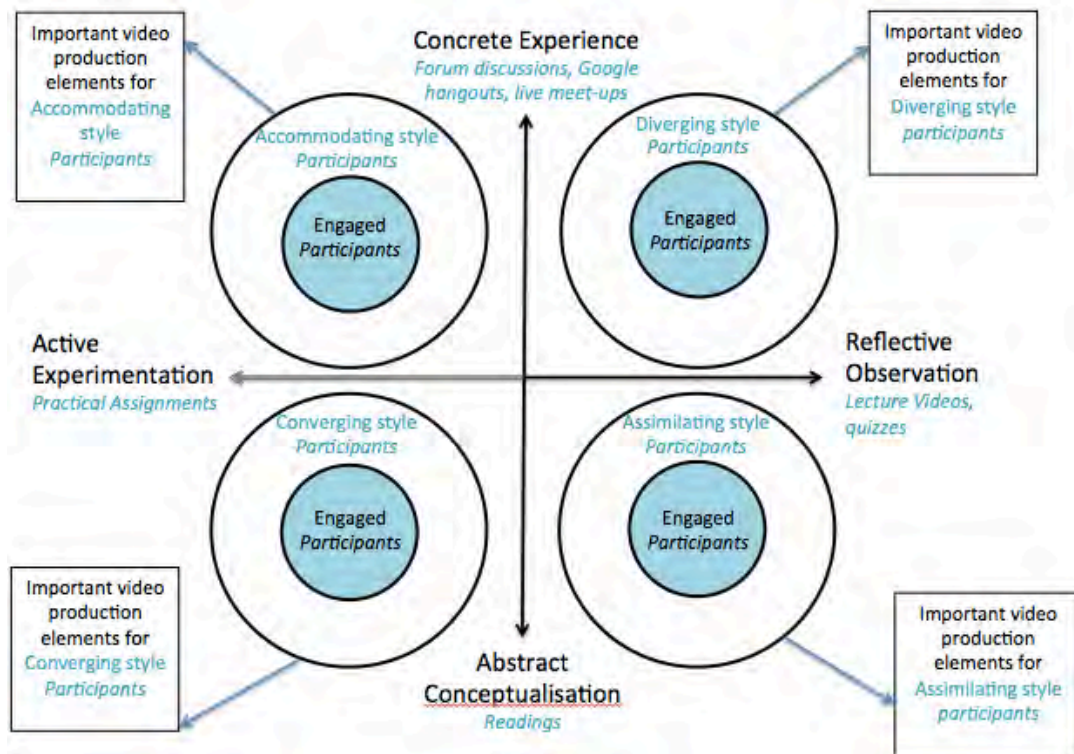
- the video lectures' role in the context of the MOOC for participants with different learning styles
- which elements of the video lead to increased engagement for different learning styles
- how elements of the videos increase engagement

In this study, Kolb's framework was intended as a basis for the development of the framework. In addition to this, Grünewald et al.'s (2013) approach of relating Kolb's Matrix and four learning stages (CE, RO, AC, AE ) to the MOOC environment was considered. According to Grünewald, each of Kolb's learning stages, as defined above, corresponds to different elements of a MOOC:

- CE: Quizzes, discussions
- RO: Videos
- AC: Readings
- AE: Practical/Peer-review assignments

The diagram below is a summary of the conceptual framework developed for the analysis of data collected during the research process. The intention was that the first part of the study would seek to understand where the MOOC

participants fell on Kolb's matrix and measure the different levels of engagement within these groups. Next, the essential video production elements for each of these groups would be determined and the findings analysed to present a set of recommendations to the UCT MOOC production team.



**Figure 2.4.3. Conceptual framework**

## 2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter covered the following sections:

- **Review of key concepts:** The key concepts in this study were reviewed, i.e. video production, engagement, MOOCs and learning styles. A number of different learning styles theories were discussed and a rationale for adopting Kolb's theory was provided.
- **Review of empirical studies and methodological approach:** A number of empirical studies were examined. The major finding was that most of these studies were quantitative in nature and thereby

failed to understand learner behaviour. This is the gap that this research aims to fill. In addition, some of the video elements identified in these studies were included in the analysis of the current study, from both a technical and non-technical perspective.

- **Review of conceptual and theoretical position:** The importance of theory was discussed as a rationale for the use of Kolb's framework.
- **Framework development:** The framework was represented diagrammatically and an explanation of how the data was intended to be analysed was also provided.

## **Chapter 3 – Research methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this research is to attempt to understand the role that the medium of video plays in engaging MOOC participants with different learning preferences and strategies, and identify the elements of video that contribute positively to this engagement. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed account of the research design and methodology employed in this study.

This chapter outlines the research orientation, types of research and research approach adopted. It goes on to provide a rationale for the site and participant selection, then describes the methods of data collection and analysis before briefly addressing issues of validity and ethics. Finally, the research procedure and chapter are summarised.

### **3.2 Research paradigm – an interpretivist approach**

The basis of the design, assumptions and interpretation of this research are an anti-positivist or interpretivist paradigm. This approach asserts that reality is subjective or that “the social world can be understood only from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated” (Cohen et al., 2007:19). Under an interpretivist research paradigm, there are no universal truths. Reality is situated within a particular context and is dynamic rather than static (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). To make meaning of a phenomenon, the researcher must attempt to understand reality from the participants’ points of view (Cohen et al., 2011).

MOOC participants have a variety of reasons for participating in free online courses, such as: academic recognition (Haug, et al., 2014), gaining new knowledge, and curiosity about the medium (Hew & Chueng, 2014). The research conducted indicates that individual experiences of these courses are

highly subjective and based on personal motivations and preferences. For this reason, it is necessary to analyse not only the behaviour and motivations of the individual participant but also the meaning behind these – this is the cornerstone of the interpretivist paradigm (Maxwell, 2008).

When trying to understand learner engagement, one needs to consider multiple perspectives and preferences and try to begin to understand and describe these. In this study, these dynamic and varying realities were acknowledged by considering that MOOC participants have different learning strategies and preferences and intended to study the differences between them. In-depth individual interviews were conducted to attempt to understand unique individual experiences in the *Medicine and the Arts: Humanising Healthcare* MOOC.

### 3.3 Type of research

This study employs both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods i.e., it takes a mixed methods approach (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A review of similar studies conducted revealed that they are mostly quantitative:

- **Quantitative:** Guo and Reinecke (2014); Aguiar et al. (2014); Wang et al. (2013); Vieira et al. (2014); Kim et al. (2014)
- **Qualitative:** Murray (2014)
- **Mixed methods:** Guo et al. (2014); Grünewald et al. (2013)

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), the varied methodological approaches used in mixed methods studies often result in superior research. This belief is supported by the literature review conducted, which suggests that the most comprehensive studies take a mixed method approach. These studies incorporate a literature review, quantitative study, qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups and/or a survey (Keengwe & Kang, 2011;

Mørch et al., 2008; Worrall et al., 2010; Shari & Soebarto, 2012; McDonnell & Hayden, 2012).

To make design recommendations, one has to understand the meaning of behaviour and perceptions of research participants. As mentioned above, monitoring behaviour alone (characterised by a quantitative dataset) might lead the researcher to make false assumptions, and purely attempting to understand perceptions (characterised by a qualitative study) might be difficult to achieve given the smaller sample typical of qualitative studies.

For this reason, this study draws from a qualitative dataset and is supported by data from three sets of quantitative surveys as described below.

### 3.4 Research approach

As mentioned previously, one of the biggest failings of previous studies, was that they neglected to search for the meaning behind the behaviour of MOOC participants. In this way, these studies were stripped of their context. One example of this phenomenon is the study by Guo et al. (2013), that tried to measure engagement using the logs from the edX platform. Furthermore, the study interviewed MOOC producers rather than students to gain insight into student engagement patterns, which is somewhat counter-intuitive.

The aim of the research, described above, seems to fit the definition of a case study quite well, which according to Hartley (2011:324), “consists of a detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena in their context”. In this case, questionnaires are distributed each week over the six week period of the *Medicine and the Arts* course that formed the context of this study. This research, therefore, took on a case study approach and incorporated qualitative methods to understand and explain MOOC learners’ engagement levels and preferences for various elements of video.

Although the type of research was largely qualitative (interviews), quantitative methods (a number of surveys) were employed to guide the interview questions. According to Maxwell (2008), qualitative research is useful when one wishes to understand a particular context, in this case, the MOOC environment. The interview and survey questions were geared towards obtaining the data collected and answering the research questions above.

Digital ethnography was also considered as an alternative methodological approach. It is “an approach to studying (digital) culture with specific epistemological claims” (Varis, 2014:2). Digital ethnography stems from ethnography, which has its roots in anthropology and is characterised by the interest in obtaining “deep and situated accounts” of people’s “lived reality” (Varis, 2014:3) where context plays a key role. I endeavoured to draw this perspective into my research as it locates the MOOC as a context with cultural norms and individual participants.

### **3.5 Methods of data collection**

This section details the data collection methods used in this study. Very briefly, the study consisted of the following components: pre-course questionnaires, course diary questionnaires, post-course questionnaires and semi-structured, in-depth interviews.

**Table 3.1 Summary of research conducted**

Research instrument	Description	Participants	Dates
Questionnaires (Electronic using Survey Monkey and Google forms)	<b>Pre-course questionnaires:</b> Administered by Futurelearn as part of the regular communication surrounding each course, the questionnaire consisted of marketing questions as well a set of behavioural and demographic questions.	2 916 respondents	16 December 2014 - 27 March 2015
	<b>Course diary questionnaires:</b> Participants completed these brief questionnaires on a weekly basis throughout the 6-week duration of the course.	23 respondents; 411 responses	24 March - 1 May 2015
	<b>The post-course questionnaire:</b> administered by Futurelearn as part of the regular communication surrounding each course. Contained questions that asked participants to report how they used the course content and how they interacted with the platform.	130 respondents	27 April - 8 May 2015
Interviews	<b>Semi-structured interviews</b> with the aim of gaining in-depth insight about MOOC participants' preferences and behaviour.	8 Participants	2 June - 13 July 2015

Each of the components above builds on the others. The literature review guided the study by determining the gaps in the existing research and guided the development of the conceptual framework. The research questions problematised this gap by explicating the focus of this particular study. The initial findings from the questionnaires unveiled the areas that required further investigation and the interviews delved deeper and sought the meaning behind the behaviour identified in the questionnaires.

More information on the data collection methods employed is provided below and summarised in Table 3.3. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 summarise how the research instruments were used to address the research questions.

### 3.5.1 Questionnaire

There were three components to the questionnaire element of the study. These were the pre-course questionnaire, the course diary questionnaires, and the post-course questionnaire. The contents of the pre- and post-course questionnaires were pre-determined by FutureLearn. Upon registration, the pre-course questionnaire was sent to participants and the post-course questionnaire on completion of the course. Both questionnaires were sent to all those who registered for the course and were completed on a voluntary basis.

**The pre-course questionnaire:** This was an electronic questionnaire that consisted of marketing questions (such as “Where did you hear about the course?”) as well as a set of behavioural and demographic questions. While demographic questions are likely to produce interesting data, one particular question was pertinent to this study. This question asks participants how useful they found each element of the course i.e., videos, discussion forums, text, quizzes or peer review assignments. The purpose of this question was to gain a broad understanding of whether people do, in fact, have different learning preferences in MOOCs and, to a certain extent, what role video lectures play. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

**Course diary questionnaire:** Participants completed these brief electronic questionnaires on a weekly basis throughout the six-week duration of the course. The purpose of the questionnaire was to ascertain how participants felt about particular videos within the course and which elements of each video positively contributed towards engagement. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

**The post-course questionnaire:** This was an electronic questionnaire containing questions that asked participants to report how they used the course content and how they interacted with the platform. These insights are

useful, but the question most relevant to this research required participants to report which elements of the course they found most valuable, e.g. videos, discussion forums, text, quizzes or peer review assignments. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

### 3.5.2 Interviews

Ten interviews were conducted between 2 June and 13 July 2015, of which eight were included in the study (see Table 3.5 for details). The interviews took the form of semi-structured Skype conversations that lasted an average of 34 minutes each. The semi-structured interviews meant that, while a set of questions guided the conversation, there was flexibility for interviewees to raise any topics of relevance not covered in the questions. The interview questions probed more deeply into participant's perceptions and behaviour and asked questions such as why they behaved the way they did with regard to video watching. What did they like or not like about the videos and why? If they stopped watching the video, why did they stop? How did they feel the videos contributed to the course as a whole? What video production elements affected their engagement and why? See Appendix D for a list of questions around which the interviews were based.

Since participants were situated all around the world, Skype provided a reliable and cost-effective means of communicating with participants from outside of South Africa. I used a programme called Callnote, which recorded the Skype interviews and stored them as .mp3 files. This program worked well for the most part, although there were two files with distorted sound. Although this distortion made transcription of these interviews slightly more challenging, a minimal amount of data was lost. The eight usable interviews were transcribed in full and coded as detailed in section 3.7.1 below. See Appendix E for the transcripts of the interviews conducted as part of the study.

**Table 3.2. Summary of how the research instruments relate to the research questions**

	Pre/Post-course survey	Course diaries	Interview
<b>Main question:</b> What is the role of lecture videos in MOOCs in engaging participants with different learning styles?	<b>General</b> - Do MOOC participants regard lecture videos as an important element of the course?	<b>Specific</b> - Collect data for each video of the course to establish whether there are differences between video types.	<b>Probing questions</b> - Gain a deeper understanding about the role of video by asking meaningful questions based on behaviour as well as previous answers.
<b>Sub question 1:</b> How do the videos work together with other elements of the course to engage learners with different learning styles?	<b>General</b> - How do participants rate videos compared with the other elements of the course, e.g. readings, quizzes, assignments, etc.?	<b>Specific</b> - Collect data each week. See how/if the relationship between video and other elements changes on a weekly basis.	<b>Probing questions</b> - Gain a deeper understanding of the role of video compared with other elements of the course by asking meaningful questions based on behaviour as well as previous answers.
<b>Sub question 2:</b> Which video production elements do MOOC participants regard as important?	<b>General</b> - Which video production elements do participants regard as important?	<b>Specific</b> - Collect data each week. See how/if the importance of various video elements changes on a weekly basis.	n/a
<b>Sub question 3:</b> How do these video production elements increase engagement?	n/a	n/a	<b>Probing questions</b> - Gain a deeper understanding of why the video production elements that were identified as important in the previous question increase engagement.

**Table 3.3. Specific questions per instrument as they relate to research questions**

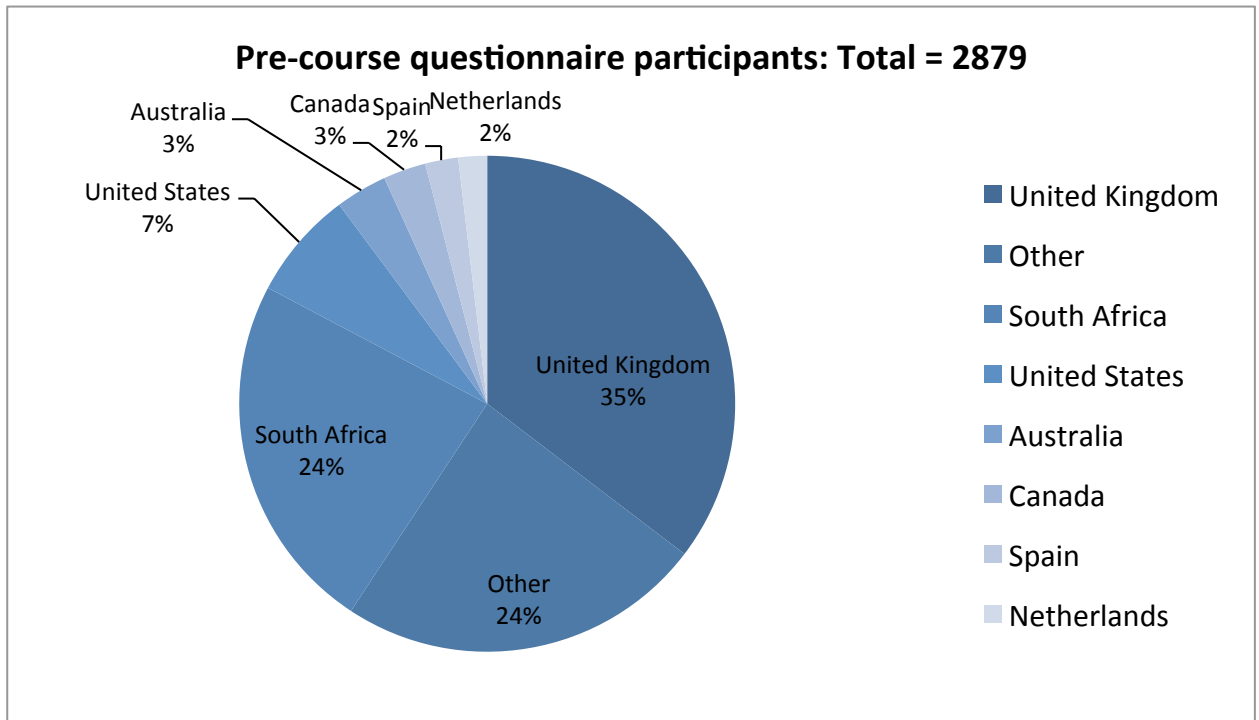
	Pre/Post-course survey	Course diaries	Interview
<b>Main question:</b> What is the role of lecture videos in MOOCs in engaging participants with different learning styles?	<b>Q3</b> – Please rate from “strongly dislike” to “strongly like” how you like to learn on FutureLearn. [ <i>Pre and Post-course survey</i> ] – Look at video in particular.	<b>Each week:</b> Please rate from "strongly dislike" to "strongly like" how you would like to learn on this online course – Look at video in particular.	<b>Q5</b> - Can you think of a specific video/a specific style of video that stood out for you? <b>Q9</b> - What role do you think video played in bringing the course together and why?
<b>Sub question 1:</b> How do the videos work together with other elements of the course to engage learners with different learning styles?	<b>Q3</b> – Please rate from “strongly dislike” to “strongly like” how you like to learn on FutureLearn. [ <i>Pre and Post-course survey</i> ] – Look at video in relation to other course elements.	<b>Each week:</b> Please rate from "strongly dislike" to "strongly like" how you would like to learn on this online course – Look at video in relation to other course elements.	<b>Q8</b> - How do you like to learn in online courses? Take me through the way you navigate courses like Medicine & the Arts
<b>Sub question 2:</b> Which video production elements do MOOC participants regard as important?	<b>Q26</b> – Thinking back to the all videos you have watched in this course, please rate how likely you were to finish watching a video. [ <i>Post-course survey</i> ] <b>Q27</b> – Thinking specifically about the videos you did not finish watching, please rate how likely you were to stop watching a video. [ <i>Post-course survey</i> ]	<b>For each video:</b> Please choose the degree to which the following statements are applicable (Content interesting, Presenter’s style appealing, Good quality video, Good quality sound, Right length, Supporting visuals, Location)	n/a
<b>Sub question 3:</b> How do these video production elements increase engagement?	n/a	n/a	<b>Q6</b> – What do you think makes a good lecture video? And can you think of the factors that absolutely need to be there vs. the factors that are nice-to-haves? <b>Q7</b> – What do you think, from a video perspective, are the frills that we could get away with excluding and still have an equal amount of impact? <b>Q10</b> – If you did not watch the video, would you still have completed the rest of the course?

### 3.6 Selection of site and participants

The site selected was the *Medicine and the Arts: Humanising Healthcare* MOOC on the FutureLearn platform. This site was selected for very practical reasons, namely, the timing of the course, the variability of the course videos and access to the data, given my affiliation with the UCT MOOC implementation team.

Since the MOOC is accessible internationally via the web, participants were from all over the world. However, as was expected, there were more participants from the United Kingdom (35%), South Africa (24%) and other English-speaking countries because FutureLearn is a British-based platform and primarily reach the UK and Commonwealth markets. Also, since UCT was the first university in Africa to run a MOOC, the *Medicine and the Arts* course attracted a relatively large number of local participants and, therefore, survey respondents. While the UK and South Africa represented single country cohorts with the majority of the representation in the course, the course attracted participants from as many as 129 countries from around the world. As can be seen from the pie chart below, “Other” countries represent 24% of the pre-course questionnaire participants and 122 different countries.

**Figure 3.1. Location of pre-course survey participants**



The nature of MOOCs is that they are voluntary/self-study, and the phenomenon of high dropout rates in these types of courses is well documented (Kim et al., 2014; Yousef et al., 2014). As a result, there were far fewer respondents for the post-course survey (130) than there were for the pre-course survey (2 878).

As part of the communications for each course, FutureLearn sends out weekly emails, at the beginning of each week, to remind course registrants to participate. For each course, an email is also sent one month before the course begins, one week before the course begins, and a week after the course ends. To recruit participants for the course diary entries and interviews, I included a link to a Google Form (online form) in the FutureLearn emails the week before the course started and the day the course began asking for people who were interested in participating in the research – see Appendix F. From these two emails, 43 course participants showed interest in taking part in the research.

Once the course started, the weekly diary questionnaire was emailed at the end of each week to those who expressed interest in participating. Again, probably due to high dropout rates as mentioned above, the research participant numbers also dwindled as the course progressed – see Table 3.4 below.

**Table 3.4. Number of diary entry participants per week**

	Number of participants
<b>Indicated Interest</b>	43
<b>Week 1</b>	22
<b>Week 2</b>	15
<b>Week 3</b>	13
<b>Week 4</b>	10
<b>Week 5</b>	9
<b>Week 6</b>	8

From the group of people who initially indicated interest in participating in the research, 36 gave permission to be contacted for an interview at the end of the course. However, I was primarily interested in participants who completed the diaries as these participants were likely to have completed most of the weeks of the course, so I added the screening criteria that potential interviewees had to have completed at least four of the weekly questionnaires. Eleven participants fulfilled these criteria – one of whom asked not to be contacted for an interview. The remaining ten were contacted via email and every one of them responded positively to the request.

Ten interviews were conducted over the period 2 June– 13 July 2015, two of which were excluded due to language issues and irrelevant content (not answering the questions). The data from the remaining eight interviews were included in the findings and data analysis sections of this study. As can be seen from Table 3.4, geographically the interviewees are roughly representative of the *Medicine and the Arts* course population (if the pre-course survey is an accurate representation of the population as a whole).

Most of the interviewees were located in South Africa, the UK, or the USA. A further summary of the interviews is provided in Table 3.5 below.

**Table 3.5. Summary of interview participants**

	Date	Age	Gender	Location	Interview used?
<b>Peter</b>	01-Jun-15	77	Male	UK	No – answers not relevant
<b>Adrienne</b>	01-Jun-15	66	Female	USA	Yes
<b>Claudio</b>	02-Jun-15	52	Male	Italy	No – language barrier
<b>Dean</b>	02-Jun-15	66	Male	South Africa	Yes
<b>Caren</b>	02-Jun-15	56	Female	South Africa	Yes
<b>Kayla</b>	02-Jun-15	19	Female	Canada	Yes
<b>Jane</b>	03-Jun-15	26	Female	Japan	Yes
<b>Enid</b>	03-Jun-15	76	Female	USA	Yes
<b>Maria</b>	10-Jun-15	60	Female	South Africa	Yes
<b>Marlene</b>	13-Jul-15	58	Female	UK	Yes

### 3.7 Data analysis methods

As mentioned previously, the study took a mixed method approach. Quantitative data were collected from the pre- and post-course surveys as well as the weekly course diaries. Qualitative data were collected in the form of semi-structured Skype interviews; there were also some qualitative data from open-ended questions in the course diary questionnaires.

As a result of these different types of data being collected, they were analysed using different methods.

#### 3.7.1 Qualitative data analysis methods

Once conducted, the interviews were transcribed, coded, and analysed. Although transcription can be a tedious process, I elected to do this myself rather than employ a transcription service, to allow me to establish common

themes across the dataset. I used Microsoft Excel to store, classify, and analyse data similar to the way Meyer and Avery (2009) describe in their article. The major advantage of using a tool such Microsoft Excel was that it afforded the ability to view the data in different ways and connect different pieces of data with one another (Meyer & Avery, 2008). The filter functionality in Excel allowed me to display the data by participant, theme, or sub-theme, and group them together in any number of configurations – see examples below.

1	Interviewee	Theme	Sub themes	References	Text
2	Kayla	Motivation	Career	KD 1	I really enjoyed it. It kind of covered almost exactly what I want to do and that's why I took I guess. I want to go into art therapy So definitely combining the whole art with healing right? [Inaudible]
3	Kayla	Background	Career	KD 2	Not quite. I am doing my specialised honours in English and professional writing at York and then I'm doing a counselling certificate at the same time.
4	Kayla	Background	Personality	KD 3	Yeah I just do summers in the one and full year in the other. It's all about time management.
5	Kayla	Location	Something new	KD 4	I really liked them. Just because I'm like in Canada I guess, there's nothing like any of the places that the videos were filmed in and that kind of thing here. I especially liked the last module on death that was beautiful. [Inaudible]. Being able to see that because over here, I don't think that would fly.
6	Kayla	Perspectives	Something new	KD 4	It was really interesting to just see another way of looking at life and death.
7	Kayla	Production quality	Bandwidth, Sound, Length, lighting	KD 4	The videos came out perfect I had no problem watching them or hearing anything so they were really good quality. None of them were too long or too short they all had just the right length. Yeah, I really enjoyed it.
8	Kayla	Perspectives	More interesting	KD 5	I don't know if I had specific ones. I liked watching the ones that had the guest speakers because they offered different perspectives and they were in a different place. Like it was in the museum or it was in the first heart surgery room and all that kind of stuff gave me different perspectives I guess. And in that sense I guess then the ones where they were just sitting in the office talking were not so fun but still interesting obviously and they had to do those introductory videos so I still watched them but I thought the other people's perspectives were more engaging.
9	Kayla	Location	More interesting	KD 5	I liked watching the ones that had the guest speakers because they offered different perspectives and they were in a different place. Like it was in the museum or it was in the first heart surgery room and all that kind of stuff gave me different perspective I guess.
10	Kayla	Learning strategy	Flexibility	KD 6	[Inaudible] I could listen or I could watch. You know, I could just do my thing.
11	Kayla	Location	Made me watch	KD 7	[Inaudible] It was the same as the ones I thought were engaging. Like if they're just sitting there in an office or just kind of like a blank screen I would probably be more inclined to listen because they're not really doing anything or showing me anything to make me look I guess. But yeah, if other people were talking or if they were in an interesting place I might be inclined to watch
12	Kayla	Perspectives	Made me watch	KD 7	[Inaudible] It was the same as the ones I thought were engaging. Like if they're just sitting there in an office or just kind of like a blank screen I would probably be more inclined to listen because they're not really doing anything or showing me anything to make me look I guess. But yeah, if other people were talking or if they were in an interesting place I might be inclined to watch
13	Kayla	Presenter / Presenter style	Made videos good	KD 9	I guess the speakers, does that count?

Figure 3.2. Interview database by Interviewee

	B	C	D	E	F
1	Interviewee	Theme	Sub themes	Referen	Text
					All of the speakers, especially the teachers. All the different men, all the different women it was really engaging and some of the things I had never heard of before, the death photographer – I'd never heard of that profession so I found that really engaging because it was learning about a different [inaudible]. I found them really engaging even though they were not doing anything exciting.
14	Kayla	Content	Something new	KD 10	Usually the ending, the wrapping up videos left me with a lot more questions than answers but I think that was one of the points of the class was to try to evoke us to think about the interdisciplinary way of things, to ask more questions so I think that did a good job of that though sometimes it was just like – whaaat?
48	Jane	Content	Got me to think	JB 21	Right, right. He talked about his music and I think I would have liked to have heard the song he was talking about that he'd actually written. That would have been really nice.
51	Jane	Content	I wanted more	JB 24	Ya, I'm not going to... you know, if somebody talks nonsense and I don't like what they're saying then... I can relate with someone who I totally disagree with but if I can connect in some way on some aspect to who they are, that helps me to engage a bit. So I don't mind a different point of view, but it must be in a way that I can interact. I mean you take Mark Solms for instance. He's great. He's focused, he's to the point, he's provocative and he's unapologetic about it. And that's great. And you know, I disagree with his premise and so on, I mean it was fascinating. I even went to look at a couple of videos on YouTube of his and it gave me great perspective of his thinking on all the topics he dealt with. You know the things around play and around whether we are just a bunch of reflexes and what have you and instincts and so on. Those were good.
92	Dean	Content	Disagree with speaker	DC 15	Ya, totally disagree, totally, totally, totally. She was talking nonsense. Worse than nonsense, she was making generalisations which are totally untrue. She might have got some interviews from some students but it irritated me intensely. I just didn't relate to her at all. And some of the things she said about how we were trained and so on. I trained at UCT and we weren't trained like that and I doubt that... ok I trained 40 years ago but I doubt that things she said actually happened. You know and some of the things that she said about the relationship between the doctor and the patient, it's nonsense man. I've been a clinician for 40 years. I don't work like that. When I interact with colleagues, yes there are useless doctors and there are doctors who have no bedside manner or patient interaction – but hang, that was a shocker. I was totally irritated by her. Take her off the course.
93	Dean	Content	Disagree with speaker	DC 17	No. I watched everything through, I watched the whole thing through but I didn't agree entirely with her, what she was saying
96	Dean	Content	Disagree with speaker	DC 18	

**Figure 3.3 Interview dataset by “Content” theme**

Using this particular data layout made it possible to use thematic analysis, which is a “data reduction and analysis strategy by which qualitative data are segmented, categorized, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that captures the important concepts within a data set.” (Ayres, 2008:3). The top themes identified are presented in the table below:

**Table 3.6. Interview data themes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Number of mentions</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Presenter style	59	Accents, Added something, Arrogance, Focus, I can relate, Importance of being comfortable, Made good videos, Passion / enthusiasm, Personal interaction, Presenter appearance, Presenter in action, Presenter knowledge, Speaking style, Supplementary content, Teleprompter,
Content	45	Can't remember, Content is important, Content varies, Different perspective, Different types of courses, Disagree with speaker, Got me to think, Guest speakers, I can relate, I wanted more, Lead educator roles, More interesting, Most remembered , Over my head, Second time around , Selection criteria , Something new, Speaker knowledge, Suggestions, Supplementary content
Video style	36	Contextualisation, Focus, Framing and positioning, Personal interaction, Props and visuals, Something new, Video background, Video set-up, Video type
Learning Strategy	33	Flexibility , How I learn
Location	32	Contextualisation, Distraction, Made me watch, More interesting, Neutral, Personal interaction, Something new
Background	32	Career, Experience with MOOCs, Links to UCT, Personal situation, Personality
Production quality	18	Bandwidth, sound, length and lighting, Listen vs watch, Not that important
Role of video	18	Bite-sized, Central role, Got me to finish, Personal interaction, Prompts engagement, Reading vs video, Variety , Visual
Perspectives	7	Something new, more interesting, Made me watch
Unexpected results	7	Tourism, Profound experience
Motivation	6	Career, UCT-specific, Personal situation, Love of learning
Engagement	2	How I engage, Bite-sized
Showcase	2	Global audience

In thematic coding as opposed to open coding, one begins with a list of “promising ideas” and categorises the data based on these themes (Ayres, 2008). The idea of electing to do the transcription myself was that I would gain understandings of what these “promising ideas” were. The themes were indirectly set by the interview questions (see Appendix D) as the questions largely dictate the content of the interview. The main themes used in the study – those with the highest number of mentions – were used to structure the analysis and findings sections. These were: Presenter style, Content, Video style, Learning strategy, Location, Production quality and Role of video. Background, although it yielded interesting results, was not seen to be in the scope of this study. Sub-themes were identified, although as a result of their being so varied, these sub-themes in Table 3.5 above were not very useful. Rather, the “Find” function in Excel was used to search for relevant data. The table below shows the keywords used for each element of the MOOC:

**Table 3.7. Key words**

Course element	Keywords
Text	text, article, read, transcript
Video	watch, video
Comments and discussions	post, comment, discuss, convers(ation), forum, social, participate
Quiz	Quiz, test, multiple, choice
Assignments	Write/writing/written), assignment, mini, essay

### 3.7.2 Quantitative data analysis methods

The questionnaire data were coded using a typical coding method where the more positive responses are given higher values and the negative responses are given lower values (Korb, 2013). Because the questionnaire was administered via Google Forms, the data was automatically collated into spreadsheet format. Each week’s form was then collated into a master database with each row representing a respondent and the columns representing each of the questions from each questionnaire for weeks 1 – 6

of the course. In order to summarise the data in pivot tables and compare between weeks, I also created a version of the database that had the responses from each week listed below the other.

Because of the low response rate for the questionnaire, performing statistical data analysis on this set of data would lead to misleading interpretations. The data from the questionnaire were therefore used more for description and triangulation – to support the data from the pre- and post-course surveys as well as the qualitative data from the questionnaires.

### 3.8 Validity and ethical issues

According to Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2006), ethics in social research focuses on the topics of consent, privacy, consequentiality, harm, confidentiality and anonymity. In this study, I recruited only those who responded positively to the request. Ethical considerations were addressed in the following ways:

**Consent** – All participants were required to complete a digital consent form for the questionnaire and interview components of the research. The consent contained detailed information about the aim of the study, how the data would be used and how confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained (see Appendix F).

**Harm** – The main risk of harm concerning this study was the possible reputational harm suffered by a participant should a controversial statement he/she made be published under their name. It is for this reason that pseudonyms were used to maintain participants' anonymity.

**Confidentiality** – Confidentiality was also maintained during the research process. Course instructors, administrators, learners and other participants were not informed of the identity of research participants.

**Anonymity** – Pseudonyms were assigned to all interview participants. Although FutureLearn’s research policy states that all respondents must be acknowledged for their contributions, the data used in this study came from independently distributed questionnaires and interviews, and the UCT code of ethics, which encourages the use of pseudonyms, has therefore adhered.

According to Hodgkinson-Williams (2013), when the goal of the study is to understand phenomena, validity is expressed through trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Since the study seeks to understand the attitudes and behaviour of MOOC participants, these themes were addressed in the following ways:

**Credibility, trustworthiness and confirmability** – In certain instances, different sources were used to answer the same research questions to maintain validity of the findings –see Table 3.2 above. This is known as triangulation, i.e., using different methods and subjects to gather the same information (Maxwell, 2008). In cases where the data collected in the interviews or diary questionnaires were questionable, observation of discussion forum posts was used to validate participants’ responses.

**Dependability** – An experienced supervisor oversaw the research process. All the transcripts of the interviews, survey data and content from the forums are provided in the appendices, and respondents were offered an opportunity to read through their interview transcripts (although all participants declined).

### 3.9 Research procedure

Most of the research was conducted during 2015, although the pre-course surveys were sent out when registration for the course started on 16 December 2014. To a certain extent, much of the data collection was dictated by the timing of *Medicine and the Arts: Humanising Healthcare*, which ran during the six weeks, 16 March to 26 April 2015.

### 3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter covered the following sections:

- **The research paradigm:** An interpretivist approach that allowed for the element of context and subjective reality – allowing individual stories to be told.
- **Type of research:** A mixed methods approach with the qualitative data forming the main dataset. The quantitative data from the questionnaires were used to generalise and corroborate the interview data.
- **Research approach:** A case study approach was taken – relying on mainly qualitative data and using quantitative data and observation to triangulate.
- **Methods of data collection:** This included pre- and post-course surveys, weekly surveys and semi-structured Skype interviews.
- **Selection of site and participants:** The site was pre-selected as the decision to use UCT's first MOOC was made upfront. The profile of the participants was influenced by the fact that the course was run on FutureLearn, which is a British-based platform.
- **Data analysis methods:** Microsoft Excel was used as a tool to store and collate data and allowed for the use of thematic analysis and coding.

- **Validity and ethical issues:** Validity issues were covered by triangulation of data from the questionnaires and interviews, and ethical issues by the fact that the research was subject to UCT's ethics policy.
- **The research procedure:** Took place from December 2014 – January 2016.

## Chapter 4 – Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the main findings from the surveys and interviews conducted.

The chapter commences with contextualising video in relation to the other elements of online courses and emphasises the importance of the medium of video in these types of courses. Next, the learning styles framework is discussed, and an alternative categorisation to learning styles is proposed. The final section of this chapter deals with the different elements of video and their relationship with engagement.

### 4.2 Video and other elements of the course

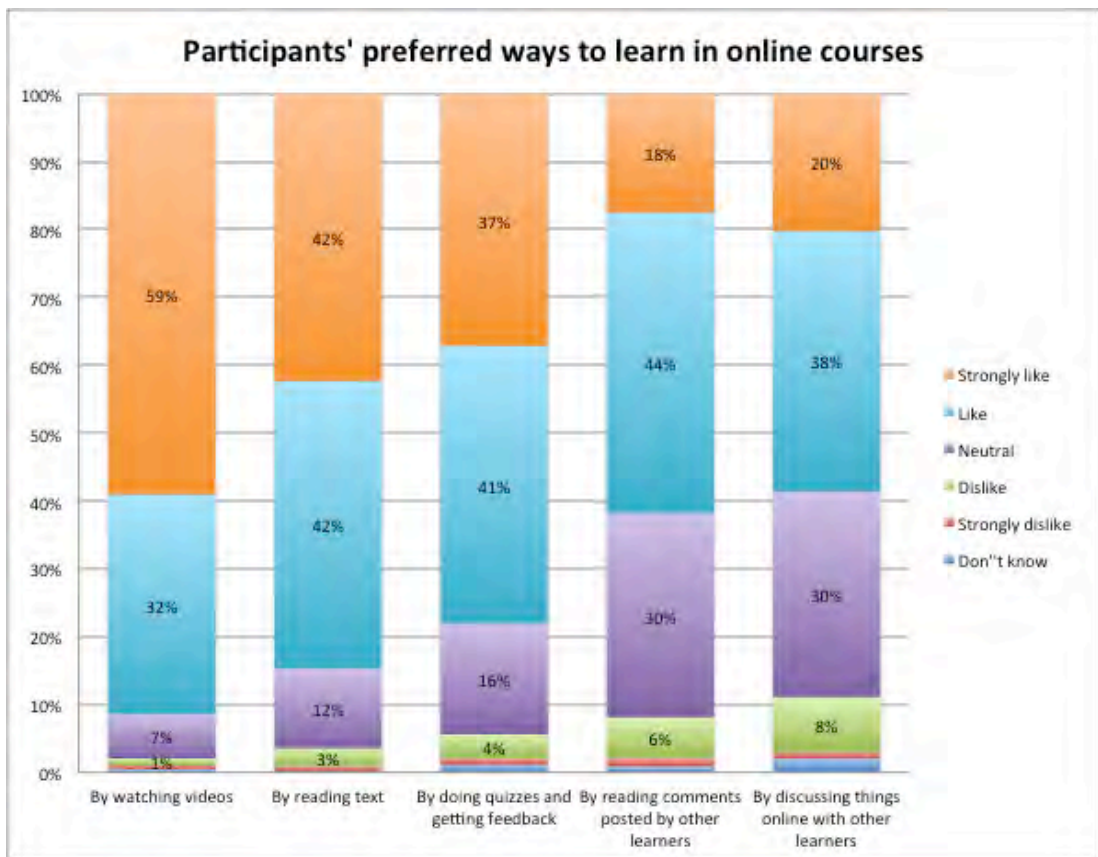
MOOCs are more than a series of video lectures. In addition to watching video lectures, learners in MOOCs also engage with the content and one another by reading text, reading comments posted in the discussion forums by other learners, participating in online discussions with other learners, completing quizzes which sometimes provide automated feedback, and submitting written assignments. To address how video contributes to learner engagement in MOOCs, one cannot consider video in isolation. Rather, one should study the use of video within the context of the course as a whole, including the components of the course mentioned above. Studying the phenomena in question within the context they occurs is consistent with the case study approach adopted by this study (Hartley, 2011)

Figure 4.1 below shows how respondents of the pre-course survey (2 916) responded to how they like to learn in MOOCs. Video and text were the preferred ways of learning. 91% of participants responded positively<sup>5</sup> to

---

<sup>5</sup> For summary purposes, a positive response is determined by adding the “Like” and “Strongly like” responses.

learning by watching videos, and 84% responded positively to learning by reading text. Reading comments and having discussions with other learners were least preferred, with 38% of participants responding neutrally or negatively<sup>6</sup> towards reading comments made by other learners and 42% of participants responding neutrally or negatively towards participating in online discussions.



**Figure 4.1. Participants' preferred ways to learn in online courses**  
**(Source – pre-course survey. Total = 2 916)**

#### 4.2.1 The importance of video

The data represented in Figure 4.1 above shows that video is strongly preferred over many of the other elements of online courses, but they fail to explain the reasons for this preference. In this section, data from the

<sup>6</sup> A negative response is determined by adding the "Dislike" and "Strongly dislike" responses.

interviews conducted are presented to explain participants' preference for video as a medium for content delivery.

It is useful to note that respondents completed the pre-course survey (source of the data for Figure 4.1) before having begun the course, and, therefore, responded in general to their preferred ways of learning in online courses. To establish whether the respondents of the course diary questionnaires were representative in terms of their preferences for the different elements in online courses, the same question was addressed to participants who completed the weekly diary questionnaire in week 1 of the course. The responses were as follows:

**Table 4.1. Participants preferred ways to learn in online courses**  
(Source – diary entry questionnaires – 23 respondents)

	Strongly dislike	Dislike	Neutral	Like	Strongly like	Don't know
<b>Text</b>	0%	5%	5%	41%	45%	4%
<b>Videos</b>	0%	0%	5%	23%	68%	4%
<b>Comments</b>	0%	9%	9%	64%	14%	4%
<b>Discussing</b>	5%	5%	27%	41%	18%	4%
<b>Quizzes</b>	0%	5%	5%	45%	41%	4%
<b>Assignments</b>	5%	9%	32%	18%	27%	9%

Of responses to learning by watching videos, 91% were positive. This is equal to the percentage of positive responses to learning by watching videos in the pre-course survey. In this weekly diary questionnaire for week 1 of the course, all participants who were interviewed responded positively to video. On the topic of preference for video, the interviewees are sufficiently representative of the larger population.

The questionnaire data above identified that the medium of video was strongly preferred over other ways of learning. The interview data below offers possible explanations as to why MOOC participants prefer video as a medium. Of the coded responses from the interviews 22% were grouped under the theme “Presenter style”. This theme emphasised the personal or relational aspect of the ability to see the person delivering the content, and all eight respondents mentioned the role that the presenter played:

*I knew it's virtually, but I assumed I was almost standing or sitting in a class and I can watch the person. So I go into that space as if it's for real. (Caren)*

*But I think the video gave more – like the personal way the professors talked about it. [Inaudible] It kind of inspired me [Inaudible] even just hearing them talk about it, you can hear how it plays a big role in their life (Kayla)*

Although not all interviewees agreed or were in a position to answer, there was an appreciation for video affording the educator the ability to show context, or as one respondent put it, providing learners with “free vacations of learning”:

*You can take us into the transplant in ways that if we were down there walking around, we would not see what we saw in the videos, and that is the profoundness of online learning. (Adrienne)*

The second most frequently mentioned theme, with 16% of mentions, was “Content”. This theme related to the ability of video as a medium to deliver content:

*I think that the video sort of gives you the basic information – the background if you like and then it's up to you how much more effort you want to put in to do anything further beyond that. (Marlene)*

However, it was not only the ability of video to deliver content, the ease with which video content can be consumed was also noted and appreciated by two of the respondents:

*You watch the video, and I guess it's not as much work. You know, reading and reading and reading you feel like you're doing something, it takes energy whereas watching the video kind of gives you a little bit of a breather. You can get the information without any effort. (Kayla)*

*The video added to the experience for me because I think if I just had to read transcripts for things I would have to be pretty fascinated by the material before I say, "Oh yeah, I'll sit and read this thing". (Enid)*

Although the sentiment towards the use of video in online courses was overwhelmingly positive, there were mixed responses about whether the inclusion of video in an online course was necessary. Two respondents, while positive about the inclusion of video, said that they would engage with the content even if there were no video lectures, while another two explicitly stated that they would not engage if the content was not delivered via video.

*So I think for myself I would be satisfied with the picture of the person who's talking and without it being a whole video with some visuals. (Maria)*

*In a couple of my other courses I just have audio files, so there's no video in it. And I found it equally as interesting and engaging that kind of stuff. (Kayla)*

*So if there wasn't a video at all, I would have not really survived going through all of the readings and stuff without any other input, I don't think. (Jane)*

*If the video wasn't in it I probably wouldn't have had the engagement with it because I wouldn't feel, I wouldn't want to look at the extra material or anything like that (Marlene)*

#### **4.2.2 The role of other elements**

While Figure 4.1 shows video as being the most significant element of the course, the other elements of the course clearly play a role too.

##### **4.2.2.1 Reading text**

In MOOCs, text takes many different forms; it could refer to the summary text below the video lectures, the transcripts of the videos or the recommended reading. The sentiment towards reading text was generally positive. All respondents engaged with the text in some shape or form, either by reading all of the articles, scanning the articles or intending to read all the articles. Only one participant indicated that she read articles selectively if they interested her.

According to interview participants, the role of text in a MOOC is to aid the understanding of video content or even as an alternative to video:

### **Text (transcripts) as an aid to understanding video or course content:**

*There is so much information that I'm trying to catch up on and by taking them often, some courses I'll just read through the whole week first just to get a sense of where they're going. (Adrienne)*

*And then I watched it again with the transcript, once I discovered the transcripts, and started taking notes with those which helped me go through it maybe just once instead of going over it another two times. (Jane)*

### **Text (transcripts) as an alternative to video:**

*Some of the courses I've taken, I just read the transcripts if the speaker on the video is not that captivating. (Enid)*

#### **4.2.2.2 Reading comments**

On the FutureLearn platform, in addition to dedicated discussions, learners are able to leave comments on every step or unit of content. Interviewees had mixed reactions towards reading comments posted by other learners.

Three participants found that reading their peers' comments failed to add any value to the learning experience. This meant that they became lower priority than the "prescribed" elements of the course.

*So I've got that prejudice against people chattering about inane nonsense and some of the participants were just off on their own thing and I found that irritating – but that is part of it I suppose. But then*

*there was (sic) some other delightful insights and where people really reflected and so on and I came away with it very positive. (Dean)*

*So the text, the content was more important to me than necessarily delving into my fellow students' perspectives on things. (Caren)*

*So I found that in the beginning of the course, it was taking up a lot more time than suggested. So I had to whittle down the time that I was doing. (Jane)*

Two out of the eight interviewees devised strategies to limit the time it took them to scroll through comments, such as only checking replies to their comments and only reading the “most liked ” comments on the platform.

*And there was just so much discussion going on and I would eventually read the most liked comments. (Maria)*

*I'm more apt to just check replies if I've been posting or go to activity and interact with new ones. (Adrienne)*

#### **4.2.2.3 Participating in online discussions**

Participants seemed to have a similar attitude towards participating in the discussions compared with reading comments. Four of the eight participants said that they do not participate either because they do not have time or because they do not have anything to contribute.

*And I find that a lot of the time I don't really have anything to say [inaudible] because everyone else has said “great video”. I don't feel*

*like I need to write that. When we were asked to participate, I participated but if we weren't, I didn't say anything extra. (Kayla)*

*Well, I find it so complex also such a high level that I don't feel comfortable enough to make comments [inaudible] I don't understand it. But other things I will have discussions about [inaudible] that I do know the answer to and I enjoy putting in bits like that. (Marlene)*

*And I also didn't contribute much to the comments because I thought I really haven't got anything else to say but also it was so time-consuming. (Maria)*

*I was ok; I have to comment once and respond to two people, and that gradually dwindled down to me only reading and then maybe commenting or maybe responding because it got just really overwhelming, but yeah, that's pretty much my process. (Jane)*

Another one of the eight participants felt uncomfortable contributing to the discussion because she felt as if she was being misunderstood:

*I had the experience that I made a comment on something and someone made a comment on my comment but she had no idea what I actually mean. But she meant it well, so it's not judgement or anything. But another person also commented on my comment which was in line with what my remark was about and, at first, I thought now – why are we missing each other; we're not on the same page here. (Caren)*

A further one of the eight participants felt really positive about the online discussion, even though she felt that it took up too much time:

*I participated more in that course than any of the courses I have done and most of mine have been on Coursera. But this particular course – medical humanities – was safe. And I saw that in other people too. The amount of information so many of us put out there, said over and over, “This is a safe place to be who I am.” And that was profound. (Adrienne)*

#### **4.2.2.4 Quizzes**

Two out of the five participants who commented about the quizzes responded positively:

*I really liked the quizzes. I prefer doing quizzes and stuff where I can get some kind of feedback. (Jane)*

*I generally do the quizzes to see how well my brain is retaining things that day (Enid)*

However, another one of these five participants thought that it was not a good fit for the type of course:

*I don't know. I suppose I thought it was a bit unnecessary but I don't know... it felt like... I don't know. I didn't quite know why we were doing them. It felt out of keeping with the kind of course it was. (Maria)*

The remaining two seemed neutral about the quizzes:

*I don't mind the quizzes but sometimes I think that the answers are too near each other and I find that quite difficult to distinguish between the right (answers) with the quizzes in some of the courses. (Marlene)*

*Mostly because I'm not grasping enough information. For me - I'm passing the tests. I'm getting the quizzes all right. There's (sic) little essays in the middle; I'm doing fine on those. But I'm not grasping what this lover of learning wants to get out of the course. (Adrienne)*

#### **4.2.2.5 Assignments**

Similarly, there were also mixed feelings about assignments, but the attitude towards them was mainly neutral to negative. Three of the five respondents who commented about assignments mentioned that they either did not have time or did not see the value and pushed them lower down their priority list:

*I also, for lack of time, if there are written assignments, I typically don't do them in any of the courses. I'm not working on buffing up my resume. (Enid)*

*The one thing that I do not like and I think it's just an age-old thing from years and years ago – I don't like the ones where there's an assignment that you've got to submit. (Marlene)*

*And I didn't do any of the writing because I just didn't have time for that. That would have been worthwhile to do but I'm amazed how much people put into it. (Maria)*

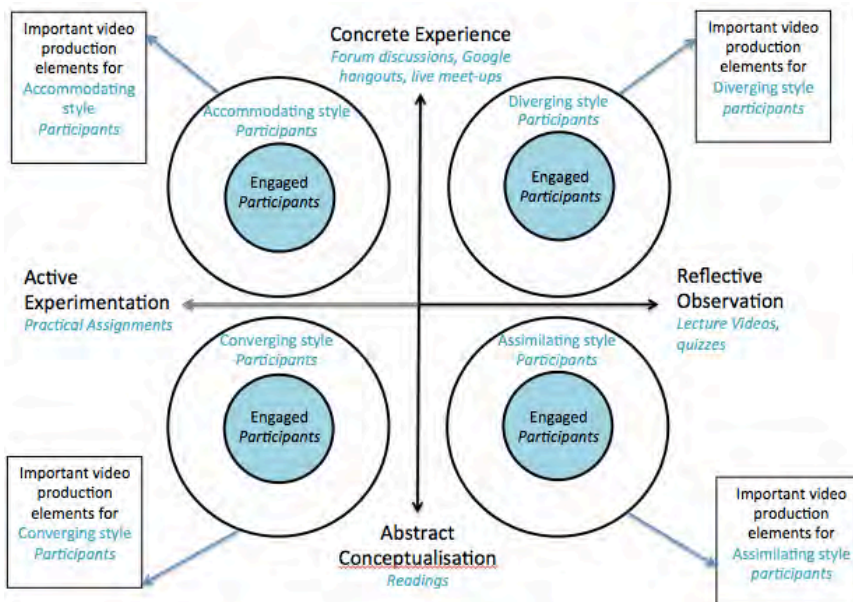
Still, the remaining two participants found value in completing the assignments –although one of them had not yet handed them in:

*They were interesting because it got us to do something different and take what we were learning and apply it. (Kayla)*

*With the assignments, most of them I haven't completely finished/haven't turned them in yet. But I've written them. (Jane)*

From the above, it can be seen that there are varying preferences when it comes to the different components of online learning. In the case of the *Medicine and the Arts* course, these were: videos, text, reading comments, participating in online discussions, quizzes and assignments. The research hypothesis was that there would be some way to group individuals in terms of their preferences for online learning. A possible way to group participants in order to determine whether similar groups might behave predictably would be to categorise them into learning styles.

#### 4.2.4 Behaviour and learning styles/strategies



**Figure 4.2. Conceptual framework**

Using Kolb's framework I endeavoured to plot participants preferred learning styles on the two axes. However, the data collected have proven that the two

ends of the axes are not mutually exclusive. The framework requires participants to prefer either reading or discussion and either assignments or videos and quizzes. The data collected presented evidence to suggest that, in almost all cases, participants prefer two activities that are on opposite ends of the “Feel/Think” and “Do/Watch” continua in Gr unewald et al.’s (2013) adapted version of Kolb’s framework.

The table below details the summary of learning preferences of interview participants.

**Table 4.2. Participant preferred learning styles**  
(Source: diary entry questionnaires)

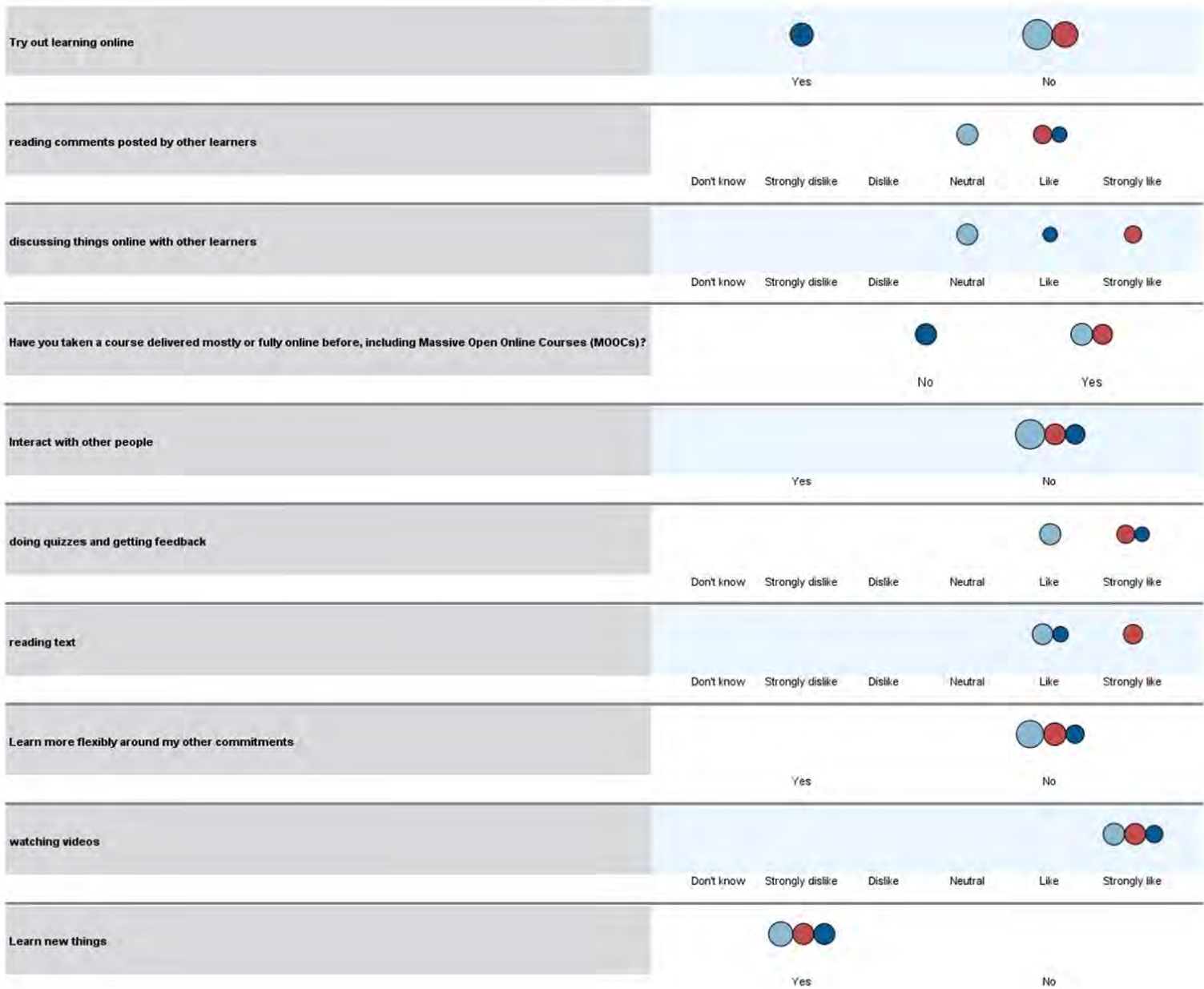
Participant	Preferred learning styles	Fall on opposite ends of continua
Kalya	[RO; AC; AE]	Yes
Jane	[RO; AC; CE; AE]	Yes
Dean	[RO; AC; CE; AE]	Yes
Caren	[RO; AC; CE]	Yes
Adrienne	[RO; AC; CE; AE]	Yes
Enid	[RO; AC]	No
Maria	[RO; AC; CE]	Yes
Marlene	[RO; AC; CE]	Yes

**Table 4.3. Summary of learning preferences of interview participants  
(Source – diary entry questionnaires & interviews – 8 resp.)**

	Video	Readings	Read Comments	Participate in discussions	Quizzes	Written assignments
<b>Kayla</b>	Watched the videos but if they weren't visually interesting, she listened instead.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Does the readings if they are interesting. If not, she just skims over them.  <b>Like</b>	Read comments but limited herself because of the time it took.  <b>Neutral</b>	Only participated in discussions when prompted.  <b>Neutral</b>	  <b>Strongly like</b>	Found the assignments interesting and enjoyed having the opportunity to read other people's work.  <b>Strongly like</b>
<b>Jane</b>	Sometimes watched the videos more than once, and took notes while watching them. Specifically liked 'discussion videos'. <b>Like</b>	Used the transcript as an aid to understanding the video content. Read the text underneath the videos  <b>Like</b>	Initially spent a lot of time on reading comments but then limited herself as it took up a lot of time.  <b>Strongly dislike</b>	In order to prioritise time, limited herself to commenting once and responding to two comments.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Enjoyed the immediate feedback provided by the quizzes.  <b>Strongly like</b>	She had written all of the assignments but had not submitted - intended to get feedback before submitting.  <b>Strongly like</b>
<b>Dean</b>	Watched videos.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Did readings.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Read comments - but was sometimes irritated by people talking nonsense. <b>Like</b>	Participated when he had something of value to say.  <b>Like</b>	Did quizzes.  <b>Like</b>	Submitted assignments.  <b>Like</b>
<b>Caren</b>	Felt that video gave the content delivery a personal element.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Hadn't read all of the reading but had the intention of going back to finish the readings.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Felt that the course content was more important than participants' opinions. <b>Like</b>	Had an experience where she felt misunderstood because of a language barrier. <b>Like</b>	  <b>Strongly like</b>	  <b>Neutral</b>
<b>Adrienne</b>	Felt that the videos allowed her to be taken to places she would not ordinarily be able to go.  <b>Like</b>	Downloads all the text onto her Kindle and reads it as background. Allows her to concentrate on the video as an experience - which would ordinarily be a distraction.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Tended mainly to read the replies to her comments.  <b>Like</b>	Participates more on the FutureLearn platform because she feels that people aren't as arrogant.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Did quizzes.  <b>Strongly like</b>	  <b>Strongly like</b>
<b>Enid</b>	Watched all videos.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Read all reading material.  <b>Strongly like</b>	  <b>Dislike</b>	Didn't feel that she got anything from participating in discussions.  <b>Strongly dislike</b>	Did quizzes as a self-assessment  <b>Like</b>	Didn't do the assignments because she wasn't doing the course to boost her career.  <b>Strongly dislike</b>
<b>Maria</b>	Watched videos.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Did readings.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Eventually only read 'Most liked' comments because of time constraints.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Didn't contribute much because she didn't have much to say.  <b>Like</b>	Didn't like them - Didn't think that the quizzes were in keeping with this type of course.  <b>Like</b>	Didn't do these as she didn't have time - would have liked to though.  <b>Neutral</b>
<b>Marlene</b>	Watched videos.  <b>Strongly like</b>	Only did readings if they were interesting. Downloaded transcripts and used them to understand video content  <b>Strongly like</b>	  <b>Like</b>	Makes comments when she has something to say but sometimes felt the content intimidating.  <b>Like</b>	Didn't mind the quizzes even though they were sometimes a bit tricky.  <b>Like</b>	Doesn't like assignments.  <b>Dislike</b>

### Cluster Comparison

2 3 1



**Figure 4.3. Cluster analysis – natural grouping of learning preferences**  
 (Source – pre-course survey. Total = 2916)

In an attempt to establish whether some other type of natural grouping may exist, a Two Step Cluster Analysis was performed on the pre-course survey data (2 916) using the statistical package IBM SPSS. The Two Step Cluster Analysis is an exploratory tool for identifying natural groupings. It differs from traditional forms of cluster analysis tools in the sense that it can handle both categorical and continuous variables, automatically selects the number of clusters and can handle large datasets (IBM, 2012). The analysis found three distinct groups with the following characteristics:

Common across all groups was that they are motivated by learning new things, strongly like learning through the medium of video and are not necessarily motivated by being able to learn flexibly or having an opportunity to interact with people. A diagrammatic representation of the cluster analysis is shown above, and the groups are further described below. The size of the clusters and the rough participant classification based on Figure 4.3 are listed below:

#### **Cluster 1 [Dark blue]** – 742 responses

**Interview participants:** None

This group has not done an online course before, and they are interested in trying out learning online. They like reading comments, discussing things online with other learners and reading text. They strongly like doing quizzes and getting feedback.

#### **Cluster 2 [Light blue]** – 1 265 responses

**Interview participants:** Kayla, Enid, Jane

These individuals have participated in online courses before. They are therefore not motivated by trying out online learning. They are neutral towards reading comments and discussing things online with other learners,

but they like learning by reading text. They also like doing quizzes and getting feedback.

### **Cluster 3 [Red]** – 927 responses

**Interview participants:** Dean, Caren, Adrienne, Maria, Marlene

This group has done an online course before; so like Cluster 2, they are not motivated by trying out online learning. However, they differ from Cluster 2 in that they like reading comments and strongly like discussing things online with other learners. They also strongly like doing quizzes, getting feedback and reading text.

When viewing the data using the cluster analysis approach it seems that there are distinct groups of learners. However, learning styles were not the best way to understand these groupings. The cluster analysis reveals natural groupings that will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Up until now, the focus has been on the different elements of the course and how they work alongside video to engage learners on MOOCs. The following sections in this chapter look in more detail at video, and specifically, how different elements of video contribute to increased engagement in online courses.

### **4.3 Measuring engagement**

Typically, the success (or failure, rather) of a video to engage learners is measured by the in-video dropout rate – i.e., how many learners, as a percentage of the total number who start the video, navigate away from the video before watching it the whole way through (Kim et al., 2014).

The inability of log data to answer these questions points towards a need for more qualitative feedback about why learners watch videos (Guo et al., 2014). The data discussed in the remainder of this chapter were collected for each video in the course via the video diary questionnaire. Based on the UCT MOOC Implementation Team's experience and the literature reviewed, the following data were collected using the weekly diary questionnaires.

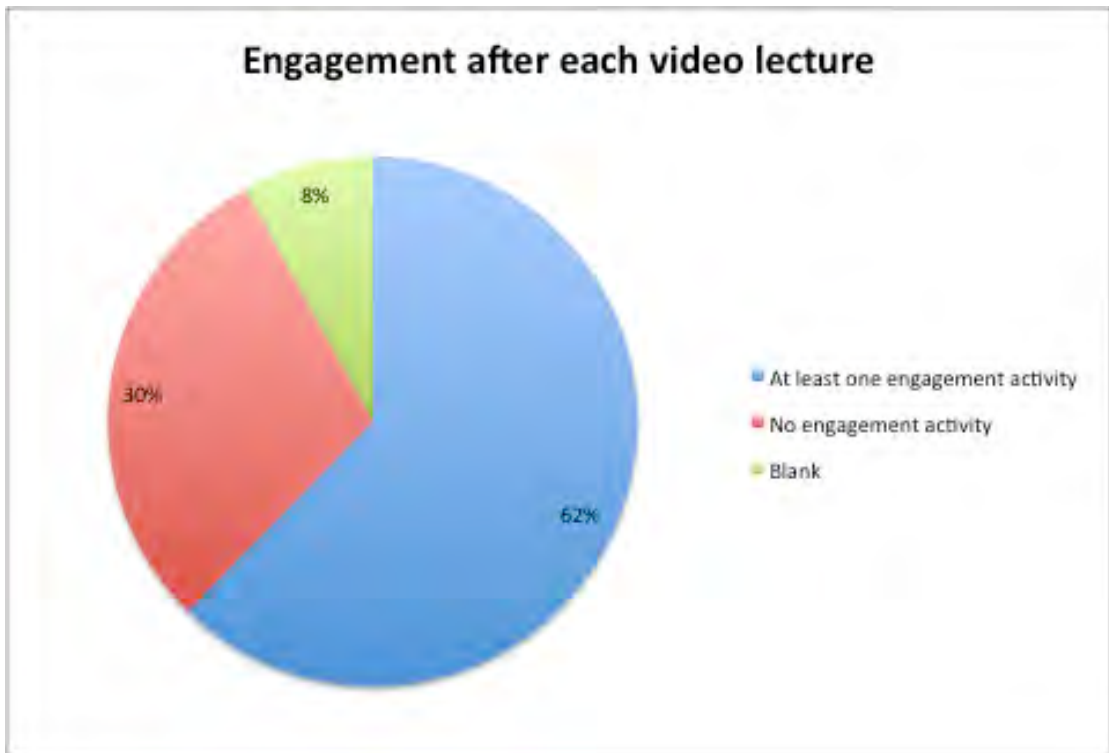
**Table 4.3. Data collected and rationale**

<b>Data collected via video diary questionnaire</b>	<b>Rationale for collecting data</b>
Appeal of presenter's style	Building rapport (Hansch et al., 2015); Personal relationship (Guo et al., 2014); MOOC team experience
Level of interest in the content of the video	Creating interest (interviews); MOOC team experience
Importance of the location of the video	Virtual field trips (Hansch et al., 2015); MOOC team experience
Perceived video quality	Production value and pre-production (Guo et al., 2014); MOOC team experience
Level of satisfaction with supporting visuals	Multimedia presentation (Hansch et al., 2015); Pre-production (Guo et al., 2014); MOOC team experience
Video length	Video length (Guo et al., 2014); MOOC team experience
Perceived audio quality	MOOC team experience

To measure engagement, i.e., “the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught” (Great Schools Partnership, 2014), I asked respondents to record the immediate action they took after watching the video. They were given the option of answering from a drop-down list that included the following options:

- Made a comment/engaged in discussion with other course participants
- Attempted/completed the quiz/assignment
- Had a face-to-face conversation about the video content
- Posted related material/made a comment on social media
- Nothing

The graph below shows engagement on an aggregated level after each of the videos. Respondents embarked on some type of social engagement immediately after the video in the form of commenting on discussions, having face-to-face conversations, posting to social media or completing the related quiz 62% of the time.



**Figure 4.4. Total engagement activity (Source – diary entry questionnaires – 411 responses)**

It must be acknowledged that these are not the only possible actions that learners can take after watching videos. Failure to take one of the actions mentioned above does not mean that the respondent did not engage with the material. In fact, two interview participants articulated this position (unprompted) in the following ways:


*I prefer taking notes and then reflecting on what I hear. (Dean)*

*I never do 'nothing' but you don't have 'ponder' on your list. (Adrienne)*

FutureLearn is, however, a social platform and focused on the social aspect of learning. Actions were therefore centred around social interaction (discussion forums and social media) rather than individual learning. Since

the latter forms of engagement with the content, such as note-taking and pondering, were not acknowledged, the list of options cannot be seen as a comprehensive list of engagement activities. Therefore, in instances where respondents responded by saying either 'Nothing' or leaving the question blank, it cannot be assumed that they did not engage with the content.

In addition to the above bias towards social forms of learning, another source of bias towards social forms of engagement was structured into the course: probing questions included in the text beneath the videos encouraged learners to interact in the discussion forum even though they may not necessarily do this had they not been prompted. An example of this can be seen below:



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

View transcript

Download video: standard or HD

## Art and play

333 comments

Professor Mark Solms, neuropsychologist

Mark Solms expands on the second insight he offers from a neuroscience perspective. This considers our innate drive to play as the underlying evolutionary mechanism for testing real world interactions. Mark suggests that art is then an expression of the human instinct to play and artistic expression offers society ways of creatively representing meaning.

It is often argued that the ability to create art and demonstrate artist expression is what distinguishes modern humans from other species. What do you think? Please respond to the question above and refer to Mark Solms' ideas in your post.

© University of Cape Town CC-BY-NC-ND

333 comments

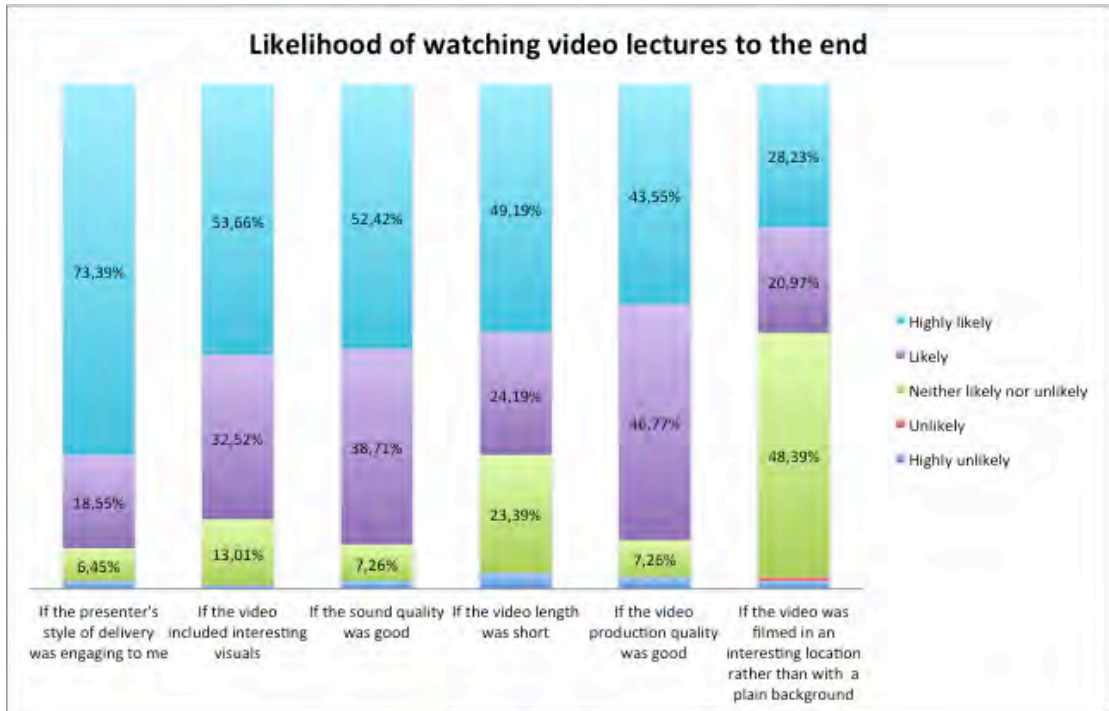
Mark as complete

**Figure 4.5. Example of video with prompted engagement**

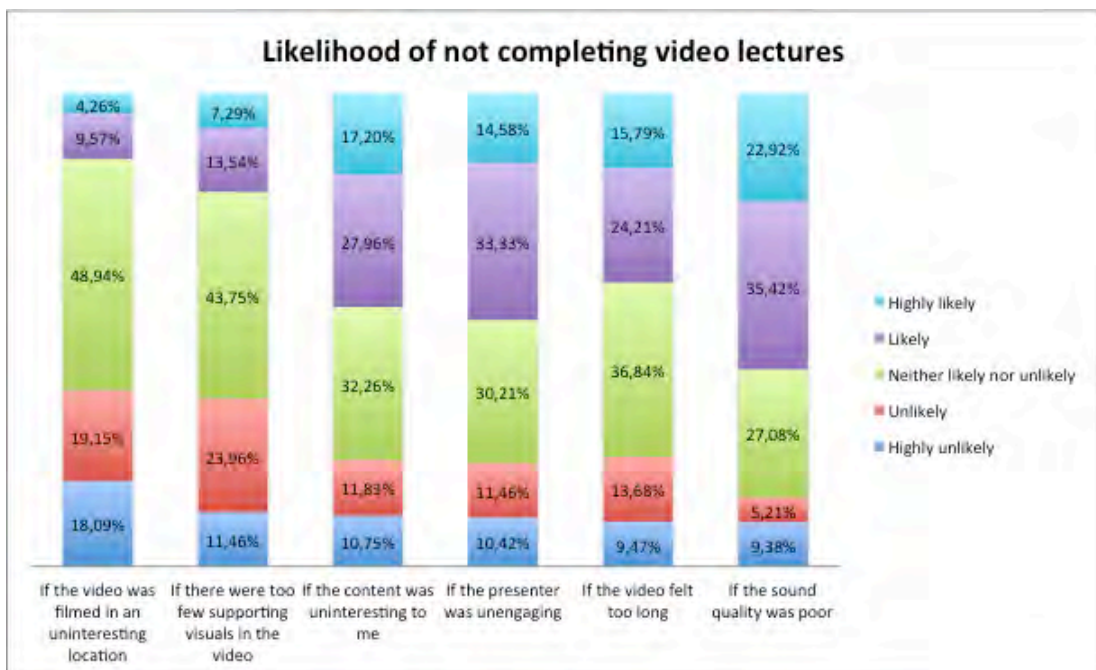
One respondent also reported that they did not always engage in the discussion forums, but they did when prompted to do so:

*I generally only participate in the discussions when I'm asked to. Just because there are so many people. I'm not going to spend an hour reading all the comments. And I find that a lot of the time I don't really have anything to say [inaudible] because everyone else has said 'great video'. (Kayla)*

In addition to the above, one could also look at engagement in terms of disengagement. The figures below represent data from the post-course survey. Respondents were asked whether they were likely to carry on watching a video under certain conditions and then, whether they would be likely to stop watching a video under the same conditions.



**Figure 4.7. Likelihood of watching videos to the end**  
 (Source – post-course survey. Total = 130)



**Figure 4.8. Likelihood of not completing video lectures**  
 (Source – post-course survey. Total = 130)

As can be seen from the above, the video being filmed in an interesting location was least likely to encourage learners to watch to the end, while presenter style, video production quality and sound quality were most likely to lead to completion (no data on content). Poor content, presenter style and sound quality were most likely to prevent learners from completing the video (no data on video production quality).

In the section below, interview participants speak directly to each of the elements of video mentioned above.

#### **4.4 Video production elements and engagement**

The above describes the possible effect of the different video elements on engagement from the perspective of disengagement. But how strongly correlated are these elements to engagement? As a starting point, for each video, video quality was measured against the following factors:

- Actual length of video (in minutes)
- Satisfaction with video length (Likert scale in video diary questionnaire)
- Actual number of visuals in video (number of images and/or inserted video clips)
- Satisfaction with number of visuals (Likert scale in video diary questionnaire)
- Interest in content (Likert scale in video diary questionnaire)
- Presenter's style appealing (Likert scale in video diary questionnaire)
- Sound quality (Likert scale in video diary questionnaire)
- Location of the video (Likert scale in video diary questionnaire)

Pearson's correlation coefficients between video quality and each of these variables are as follows:

**Table 4.4. Correlation of various elements with video production elements**

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Relationship
Video length (actual)	0,07	No linear relationship
Video length (reported)	0,62	Moderate positive relationship
Number of visuals (actual)	0,11	No linear relationship
Number of visuals (reported)	0,63	Moderate positive relationship
Interest in content (reported)	0,59	Moderate positive relationship
Presenter's style appealing (reported)	0,58	Moderate positive relationship
Sound quality (reported)	0,78	Strong positive relationship
Location of the video (reported)	0,51	Moderate positive relationship

In the section below, interview participants speak directly to each of the elements of video mentioned above.

#### 4.4.1 Length of video

Those interviewees who commented on the length of the videos found them to be a good length:

*None of them were too long or too short they all had just the right length. (Kayla)*

*They were short; they were to the point, and they got the message across so I thought that added a really personal aspect to it. (Dean)*

#### **4.4.2 Number of visuals**

Interviewee participants commented on the number and quality of visuals (still images and video footage) that were edited into the video lectures.

The view on whether visuals were important was quite balanced. Two participants mentioned the importance of including visuals but emphasised that visuals should be relevant to the content being discussed.

*I like a lot of visuals that actually connect with what the person's saying at the time they're saying it. (Jane)*

*Yes... but bad content is not going to be made up for by a great visual as such – it's got to connect. It's got to try and disturb my thinking so that I see something from a slightly different perspective. (Dean)*

Another participant commented on the ability of images and video footage to provide context:

*Then you get in there, and it's like I don't want to stare at your ugly mug, go walk outside, show me things. There was one on Cryptoguard that I saw that the guy went into his city a lot, he went*

*into the home of Cryptoguard and into the library and so that you felt like you were visiting the city. (Adrienne)*

While none of the participants were against including supporting visuals in the video lectures, three out of the eight alluded to the fact that visuals are not the most important element of these lectures:

*So even without a visual to go with it, I would still listen to the full audio clip. So yeah, I think that would be equally as effective. (Kayla)*

*With the visuals, I think a message can still be got across without a whole lot of visuals, but there still needs to be some... (Jane)*

*Quite a few of them had visuals, and I think they helped. But I think it's the personality. (Maria)*

#### **4.4.3 Interest in content**

For two of the participants, the content was the main or a very important part of the video lectures:

*I'm so focused on the content and the communication with the person delivering the course that the background is secondary. (Caren)*

*Well, of course, having an interesting speaker and an interesting topic is the at the head of the list. (Enid)*

Another respondent emphasised that learning and engagement are about more than having access to content. She stressed the opportunity to engage with the content:

*Usually, it's just mental. Learning facts and regurgitating them back. And I got to think and ponder and engage with others. That course was everything that an online course should be and could be. I'm amazed at that course. (Adrienne)*

Another respondent revealed how she deals with content that is not interesting to her:

*In some cases I would prefer that if the content's boring then I'd just put it in the background. (Kayla)*

#### **4.4.4 Presenter's style appealing**

Six of the eight participants commented on the effect that the presenters' style had on them as viewers of the video lectures. Participants spoke mainly about the presenters' passion and knowledge, and the manner in which the medium of video allowed them to feel as if the presenter was speaking directly to them:

*They all seemed to really love what they were talking about. That made them more interesting and more engaging because they spoke about the stuff with passion. (Kayla)*

*Well, it's nice when it seems like the speaker is talking to me and not just to dead air, so I think that's part of the person's presentation as well as the video positioning. (Jane)*

*An animated presenter, whether it's visual or auditory only... I'd rather have something that's interesting than something that's just visual because... just to make it visual. (Dean)*

*Yes, it made me feel like she was talking to me... I don't want to use the word intimate because that's wrong. I will just explain it by saying it was direct communication that I experienced on an intellectual level as well as on an emotional level. (Caren)*

*But I think it's the personality – the person and their enthusiasm and passion probably more than anything. (Maria)*

*I think obviously the person giving the lecture has to be engaging, has to not only know the subject but has to be really passionate about the subject. I don't think it does much good for any of us if they're just repeating facts. (Marlene)*

Equally, where the presenter's style was distracting or off-putting, participants spoke about how this had a negative impact on their ability to concentrate or focus on the positive aspects of their talk.

*I focused on his eyes. And his eyes were going up and down because he was reading the text and then focusing, looking into the camera but his head is kind of still. But his eyes are moving up and down. ... So I had to work quite hard to avoid that because the moment we suffer from a lack of eye contact, it's hard work for me to concentrate. (Caren)*

*Yeah, but it was that, it was that he came across so arrogant, and he came across as if we were really too stupid to understand anything he*

*was saying. And it stood out so much in that course that invited us as thinkers, and intelligent human beings to come in and enjoy and to help, to share our experience. (Adrienne)*

#### 4.4.5 Sound quality

Many of the participants commented on the sound quality of the videos, but only one participant spoke specifically about the importance of good quality sound and what effect poor quality sound had on her ability to engage with the content.

*Yes, I really do think sound is the most important thing. Because tone of voice can also get across what the person is trying to say and if it's distorted then I really can't figure out what's going on. (Jane)*

One participant mentioned that the sound quality was not always optimal and expressed her preference for high-quality sound:

*But sometimes some of the videos... the sound wasn't that great because I had to put my laptop on 100 and I would have preferred (and I don't have a hearing problem) I would have preferred maybe the sound be more controllable that I can rather lower the volume than to put it at highest and I still can't hear. (Caren)*

Another participant hinted that the questionnaire caused her to pay more attention to the sound than she would ordinarily have done.

*Except the one where the audios were a little different ... it seemed kind of they were in two different places, and they didn't do an audio*

*check, that's what it looked like. But that was just because I was paying attention to that. (Adrienne)*

#### **4.4.6 Location of video**

Opinions about the video setting varied greatly. Some participants felt that the setting of the video added a great deal to their interest in watching the video lecture while others felt that the setting had no influence at all.

For four of the participants, the location of the video helped establish the context of the presenter's talk:

*I really enjoyed when they were set in a particular place that related to their video or they had props to show us because it helped it be more tangible for me. (Jane)*

*You guys allow me free vacations of learning. You take me in a museum, and I don't have to learn about these tall people that are blocking my view, I get to see upfront because you're allowing me to see upfront what is there. And for me, that's one of the greatest gifts that online learning can provide students. (Adrienne)*

*At the museum or something, was it not, I found that quite good actually because it gave you a sort of sense of where it happened and a position for it to be occurring. (Marlene)*

*Like if they're just sitting there in an office or just kind of like a blank screen I would probably be more inclined to listen because they're not really doing anything or showing me anything to make me look, I*

*guess. But yeah, if other people were talking or if they were in an interesting place I might be inclined to watch. (Kayla)*

There were mixed responses to the videos that were filmed in the lecturers' offices. One participant responded very positively while another found it distracting:

*Listening to Steve talking in his study is fine. That's to me, more interesting to look what's in the background. What books is he reading, you know, all that sort of stuff what artwork does he put on his wall? I think that's far more interesting. (Dean)*

*But for me because I'm very kinesthetic, I'm very visual, the ones with nothing behind them were probably the best for me because like when Susan was in her office, it's like, what's that title of that book, what is that, and my brain kept going all over, I finally just had to listen and just not watch it. (Adrienne)*

Two of the participants felt neutral to the setting of the video:

*No. I'm so focused on the content and the communication with the person delivering the course that the background is secondary. It's not my primary focus. (Caren)*

*As far as the setting of the video, I'm a little bit indifferent to that; it doesn't matter if the background is somebody's office or they're out in the park or where they are actually sitting. To me, that doesn't make a lot of difference. (Enid)*

## 4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter covered the following sections:

- **Video within the context of other elements in the course:** While video seems in many cases to be the major component of online courses, video lectures do not operate in isolation. The various elements of the courses also play a role in engaging learners on the course.
- **Learning styles:** While there are certainly personal preferences when it comes to learning in online courses, Kolb's learning styles framework does not seem to provide a useful framework for explaining these different preferences. Instead, a cluster analysis performed on the pre-course survey data revealed three natural groupings of learners based on their preferences.
- **Measuring Engagement:** Engagement is a complex construct and is complicated to measure. In analysing the data obtained from this study, it became clear that the traditional or original measures of engagement were not appropriate.
- **Video production and engagement:** There are many elements of video production that influence engagement. In this study, I looked at video length, number of visuals, interest in content, presenter's style, sound quality and location of video. Each of these elements seems to have different levels of importance to different students. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5 – Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the main findings of this study, presented in Chapter 4.

The chapter commences with an analysis of the role of video in MOOCs, comparing the results of the research conducted with the current literature on the pedagogical affordances of video. The natural grouping of learners revealed by the cluster analysis is then discussed as an alternative to thinking about how the role of video in MOOCs might differ for students with different learning styles. The final section of this chapter deals with the relationship between engagement and the elements of video identified in the previous chapter (i.e., presenter's style, inclusion of visuals, video length, sound quality and video location).

### 5.2 The role of video

While video lectures are often the central content delivery component of MOOCs (Hansch, et al., 2015), as Bates (2015) warns about television and open education resources (OERs), it would be imprudent to think of them as a pedagogical panacea for online learning. These video lectures typically mimic didactic-style face-to-face lectures that are known for being ineffective in developing critical thinking skills, fostering deep understanding and supporting the application of knowledge (Bates, 2015). Despite the shortfalls of the medium, videos remain an important component of these courses (Hansch et al., 2015) and it is therefore important to understand the role that they play within the context of these MOOCs.

What then, is the role of the video lecture in a MOOC? Literature suggests that the affordances of video provide pedagogical opportunities that are not achievable through other media such as text and audio (Hansch et al., 2015).

Bower (2008) has extended Gibson's definition of the term affordance to apply to the online learning environment. The term describes the property of a technology that can be exploited by the user, regardless of the user's perceptions of how the technology should be used; and this is the definition of the term adopted here. Hansch et al.'s affordances of video in online courses are listed below in Table 5.1.

In addition to the ubiquity of the use of video, the research conducted in this study indicates that, of all the elements of the MOOC (video, text, quizzes, assignments, etc.), video was most preferred by participants. This finding was substantiated by data from the pre-course survey, the weekly course diaries and post-course survey, as well as the semi-structured interviews. Section 4.2.1 describes in detail the reasons for interview participants' preference for video over other media. In summary, these are the ability of video to:

- develop a seemingly personal relationship between the learner and the educator
- create interest in the content
- provide access to places otherwise inaccessible to the learners
- chunk content into an appropriately digestible length
- provide a passive form of learning

It is important to note that these elements of video have more to do with the presenter, content and medium of delivery than with the actual production quality or slickness of the video. Therefore, as Hansch et al. (2015) propose, television quality video production observed in some MOOCs may be a completely unnecessary expense.

These preferences also link directly to Hansch et al.'s affordances of video in the online learning environment. The table below demonstrates how these affordances are reflected in the findings of the current research project.

**Table 5.1. Hansch et al.'s video affordances for online learning – alignment with interviewee responses**

Affordance (Hansch et al.)	Explanation	Quote from interview participant	Benefits of video mentioned by interviewees
1. Building rapport	Establishing an emotional connection	<i>It's like sitting in their office talking to a prof. And that is a profound experience. (Adrienne)</i>	Personal relationship
2. Virtual fieldtrips	Access to people and places	<i>I get to see upfront because you're allowing me to see upfront what is there. And for me that's one of the greatest gifts that online learning can provide students. (Adrienne)</i>	Access to places
3. Manipulating time and space	Micro/macro views and slow motion	N/A	N/A
4. Telling stories	Captivating viewers and taking them on a journey	<i>You can take us in, you can take us into an autopsy. You can take us into the transplant in ways that if we were down there walking around, we would not see what we saw in the videos, and that is the profoundness of online learning. (Adrienne)</i>	Create interest/Access to places
5. Motivating learners	Stimulating appetite to learn by conveying enthusiasm	<i>You know, you can pick up emotion, body language. Their passion for what they're doing. All sorts of things come through. And I think that's important to see. (Dean)</i>	Personal relationship
6. Historical footage	Bringing the past to life	<i>I think that probably I remember it better than some of the others because my professional background when I was still working was in healthcare and I'm old enough that I remember all the hooahaa about Dr. Barnard and the first heart transplant. So it's kind of fascinating to see all that material preserved in that museum setting there. (Enid)</i>	Access to places
7. Demonstrations	Showing experiments and psychomotor skills	<i>Maybe if the presenter had props so that if they had something that they could focus you to – like the one who had the heart monitor. I really enjoyed that as well. (Jane)</i>	Create interest
8. Visual juxtaposition	Creating meaning through contrasting concepts	N/A	N/A
9. Multimedia presentation	Combining audio-visual elements	<i>I really enjoyed when they were set in a particular place that related to their video or they had props to show us because it helped it be more tangible for me. (Jane)</i>	Create interest

There is strong alignment between Hansch et al.'s affordances of video and the reasons cited by interview participants for video being a preferred medium for learning in MOOCs. “Manipulating time and space” and “Visual juxtaposition” did not feature in the *Medicine and the Arts* course and neither

were they mentioned by interviewees. In the table above this is indicated by the cells marked “N/A”.

There were two items mentioned by interviewees that do not feature on Hansch et al.’s list. The first is the ability of videos to be divided into “bite-sized” pieces of content.

*I think that the video sort of gives you the basic information – the background if you like and then it’s up to you how much more effort you want to put in to do anything further beyond that. (Marlene)*

This is perhaps more of a design decision than an affordance of video, since any method of content delivery (e.g. text, audio, etc.) has this same feature. It is likely that this was mentioned because the designers of the *Medicine and the Arts* MOOC attempted to adhere to the recommendations from a variety of sources that advise keeping the length of video lectures short and concise – some specify six to seven minutes (Talbert, 2014; Kim et al., 2014; Moser-Mercer, 2014)

The second item is the more passive form of learning that video provides as opposed to reading text, where the learner is required to put in an effort by reading the material.

*You watch the video, and I guess it’s not as much work. You know, reading and reading and reading you feel like you’re doing something, it takes energy whereas watching the video kind of gives you a little bit of a breather. You can get the information without any effort. (Kayla)*

*The video added to the experience for me because I think if I just had to read transcripts for things I would have to be pretty fascinated by the material before I say oh yeah, I'll sit and read this thing. (Enid)*

Although not directly related to Hansch et al.'s affordances, one could make a link to "Motivating learners" or the ability of video to stimulate a learner's interest in the content. Consuming a summarised version of the content via video lecture requires less effort than to read a full academic article, and this effort is often an inhibitor for engaging with the content. Eliminating the effort may increase the chances of the student engaging with the content, and this is an affordance that the medium of video presents. This is even more important in MOOCs where participation is voluntary, and commitment levels are lower (Young, 2013) as compared to paid-for online courses.

Despite video being the preferred medium for content delivery in MOOCs, it should only be used by MOOC designers where the affordance requirements of the learning task match the affordances of the medium of video. Each element of the course has a role to play, and course designers should be deliberate about how these elements are used in relation to their pedagogical goals. This sentiment is echoed by Giannakos et al. (2014:4): "The combination of video with other learning services has great potential to provide to students with an integrated online learning space."

It is reasonable to presume that this ideal combination of elements, and particularly the use of video lectures in MOOCs, may be different for different types of learners, and this is what this research project sought to investigate.

### **5.3 Learning styles**

This research set out to determine whether the role that video lectures play in MOOCs differs depending on an individual's learning style. An alternative version of Kolb's learning styles theory that was adapted by Gr newald et al.

(2013) for the MOOC environment was considered (see Figure 2.4.2 in Chapter 2). Kolb identified four learning styles, and Grünewald et al. (2013) identified the elements of a MOOC that could be associated with each of the learning styles (see Figure 2.4.3). However, upon conducting the research, two major issues with using this approach were identified.

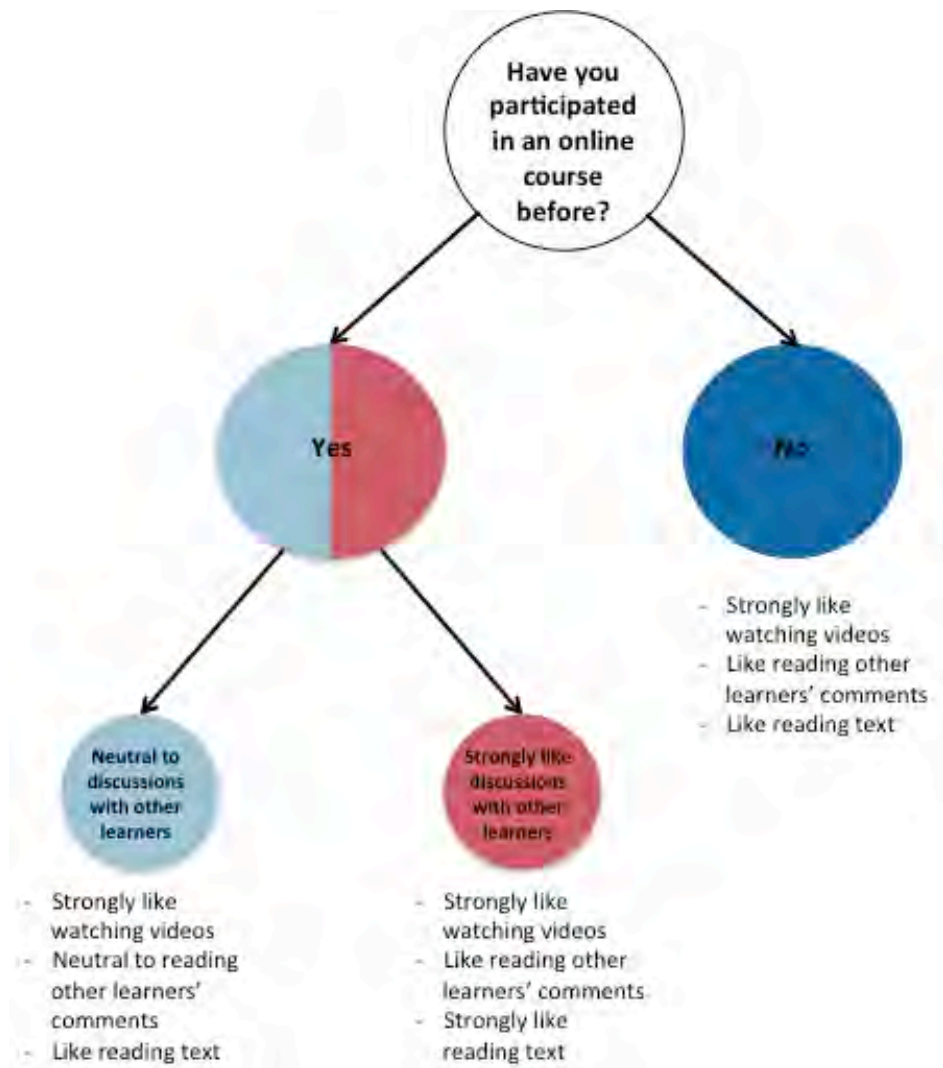
The first issue was an oversight in the research design. The decision was made to categorise participants according to their learning styles diagnostically rather than having them self-report their learning styles. This decision was taken in order to enhance the consistency and the validity of the data. In order to classify learners according to their learning style (as presented by Grünewald's adaptation of Kolb's model), participants were asked about their preference for each of the different elements of MOOCs. They were not, however, asked to compare elements or rank one against another. The data collected was not suitable for description in terms of Grünewald's framework because this framework is represented by a set of axes, with, for example, discussions on one end of the continuum and text/readings on the other, and the research design did not require participants to compare these two elements.

The second issue is a possible error in logic within the framework. Grünewald's framework described in section 2.4.1 and mentioned above assumes a binary approach to learning styles. To follow through with the example given above, this means that learners in MOOCs are expected to prefer either discussions or text/readings. There is no scope in the model for learners who prefer both or neither. As seen in Table 4.2 in Chapter 4, seven out of the eight interview participants reported that they either "liked" or "strongly liked" both discussions and readings. Therefore, from the research conducted, there is no evidence to support the view that an individual learner should have a preference for either one of these elements.

The importance for an understanding of individual preferences in MOOCs was highlighted in Kalz and Specht (2013) while the inconclusiveness regarding these preferences also came through in Harrop and Turpin's (2014) study of learning space preferences. This may be an indication that individual preferences in MOOCs is a strong contender for future research.

The failure of this study to identify individual preferences as per Kolb's framework does not imply that there are no natural groupings of learners in MOOCs. In order to determine if natural groupings exist, a cluster analysis was conducted on the pre-course survey data. Cluster analysis is a statistical method that groups objects in such a way that they are more similar to objects in their same group than objects in other groups (Norušis, 2011).

Three natural groupings were revealed based on a cluster analysis conducted on the pre-course survey data. Figure 5.1 below illustrates the characteristics of the groups identified by the cluster analysis.



**Figure 5.1. Summary of three natural groupings and characteristics found in the cluster analysis**

Based on the findings in the section above, it came as no surprise that all three clusters strongly like learning by watching video lectures. For the purpose of this analysis, I exclude the group of learners who have not yet undertaken an online course in order to focus on real rather than perceived preferences. Looking at the groups of learners who have previously participated in an online course, it is evident that the major differentiating factor between the two groups is that the one group is neutral towards engaging in discussion with other learners and reading comments made by other learners, while the second group strongly likes discussing with their

peers and likes reading comments. Brinton et al. (2014) label this learning by engaging with peers on discussion forums as social learning.

Reed et al. (2010, no pagination) however, have a more specific definition of social learning: “a change in understanding that goes beyond the individual to become situated within wider social units or communities of practice through social interactions between actors within social networks.” According to this definition, the learning must be shared in order for it to be deemed social learning. Since this has not been tested, I refer to engagement in discussion forums and reading comments as social engagement rather than social learning.

Interview participants had various views on social engagement in MOOCs. From sections 4.2.2.2 and 4.2.2.3 above, it seemed as if most participants did not enjoy, or at least avoided, engaging via the comments and discussions. The reasons most participants cited were the time it took to read and engage on the discussion forums and a sense that other learners had already “said it all”. Some participants also found the forums overwhelming because of the volume of comments, and this is perhaps as a result of how the FutureLearn discussions are set up, i.e., as one long thread, which makes it difficult to follow. Another issue stated by interview participants was the quality of conversation. The forums did not always lend themselves to meaningful conversations about the content.

Interestingly, despite the deficiencies of the social affordances of the platform, FutureLearn as a MOOC provider place a strong emphasis on the social nature of their platform which, they claim, allows and encourages learners to interact with peers (FutureLearn, 2016). While it is clear that some learners are more inclined to engage socially, one also has to take into account the role that the platform affordances play in this decision.

Nonetheless, the idea that some learners prefer social engagement more than others is in line with Dunn and Dunn's learning styles framework that builds on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Denig, 2004). Dunn and Dunn's model considers environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological, and psychological variables. The findings above suggest that at least one of these variables – sociological – could provide further insight into how learning styles relate to the preferences of MOOC participants.

While it is clear that some participants prefer engaging socially while others are neutral to learning in this way, and that all three of the groups identified strongly liked learning by watching videos, there is no more clarity about whether video plays a different role for either of these groups.

The above suggests that social engagement in MOOCs is perhaps an area for future research; however, it is not the only form of engagement in MOOCs. The focus of this paper remains the role that video plays in driving engagement in MOOCs.

#### **5.4 Measuring engagement**

As outlined in Chapter 3 above, engagement was originally meant to be measured according to the action taken by the learner after watching a video. However, the previous section identified that the question was limited, and that quantitative data is perhaps not as useful as qualitative data in measuring engagement.

Video length receives much attention when it comes to MOOC production (Talbert, 2014; Kim et al., 2014; Moser-Mercer, 2014). It has been suggested that six minutes should be the upper limit of any single MOOC video lecture (Guo et al., 2014). Many of these studies rely on log data, which, as explained previously, does not take into account the reasons that MOOC participants fail to watch a video lecture all the way through.

When commenting on video length, respondents seemed happy with the length, even though the length of videos ranged from one-and-a-half to fourteen-and-a-half minutes. A possible explanation for this is that a video lecture that is actually long as compared to the recommended length may not seem long to the viewer if they are engaged in the content. Alternatively, a video that is short in length may seem long to the viewer if they are not engaged or interested in the content. Perhaps the focus then should be more on delivering an interesting chunk of content succinctly than trying to keep the video length to six minutes.

Similarly, there seemed to be a large variation in opinion about supporting visuals. Again, this discrepancy could be accounted for by the fact that supporting visuals only add value when they are relevant. A small number of visuals that are highly relevant to the content of the lecture may add more to engagement than a large number of visuals that are not as relevant to the content of the video.

While most participants agreed that content was important and contributed positively to engagement, there was mixed opinion about whether the location of the video or supporting visuals were important. One should be careful to draw any conclusions here as there are many possible explanations for this.

There was, however, strong agreement among participants that the presenter style and personality played a large part in engaging participants. As with face-to-face interactions, the presenters' passion and enthusiasm for the subject matter that they are delivering seems to be infectious, and this seems to have a major effect on engagement or disengagement in MOOCs. This finding is in line with Hansch et al.'s affordances of video.

It is clear from the above that, of all the elements mentioned, presenter style has the most notable effect. All the elements of the video mentioned above have an effect on engagement as seen in Chapter 4; however, the question of how the elements of video affect engagement remains unanswered. There is no definitive answer as to which elements affect engagement more than others. Opinion was varied among interview participants, and this finding points to the role that personal preferences play, and requires more rigorous research before any strong conclusions can be drawn.

Whether it can be attributed to learning styles or not, there seems to clearly be an element of personal preference when it comes to the appeal of a video. As far as this study is concerned, while all of the factors mentioned seem to have an effect on engagement, there do not seem to be any clear conclusions about the drivers of engagement for any particular group.

## 5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter covered the following sections:

- **The role of video:** There seemed to be strong alignment between Hansch's affordances of video and the benefits of video cited by interviewees. Despite the overwhelming preference for video in MOOCs, it is recommended that the use of video in MOOCs be built around the affordances of the medium and that MOOC designers avoid over-use of the medium.
- **Learning styles:** While the idea of using learning styles to ascertain MOOC learners' preferences did not go according to plan, it was found that a preference for or against social engagement is a major differentiator when it comes to learners' personal preferences in MOOCs.

- **Measuring engagement:** Aside from the fact that presenter style played a strong part in driving engagement, the drivers of engagement for the remaining elements were inconclusive. While it was found that all of the elements proposed affected engagement in some way, the data do not reveal any evidence as to how each of the elements affects engagement or which elements affect engagement more than others.

## Chapter 6 - Summary and recommendations

### 6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the findings of the research project and recommend areas for future research.

The chapter commences with a summary of the main findings of this study by looking at each of the research questions identified at the beginning of this thesis. The thesis is then concluded by listing recommendations for future research.

### 6.2 Summary of findings

#### 6.2.1 How do the videos work together with other elements of the course to engage learners with different learning styles?

Video plays a key role in MOOCs. The pre-course survey and interview data indicate that most people enjoy learning by watching video. The reasons given for the preference for video as a medium of consuming information are largely in alignment with Hansch et al.'s (2015) affordances of video as mentioned in Chapter 5. These include building rapport, virtual field trips, manipulating time and space, telling stories, motivating learners, historical footage, demonstrations, visual juxtaposition and multimedia presentation.

Interview participants also cited two additional reasons for preferring video. The first is more a property of the videos in the course than in general –that the videos were split up into chunks of knowledge that were easy to process. The second is that video is perceived as a more passive means of consuming knowledge, not requiring too much effort on the learners' part, and this seemed to motivate some learners to watch the videos.

All interview participants agreed that the presenters played a crucial role in their appreciation of the videos. This aligns with Hansch's first affordance of building rapport. Participants were very vocal about the effect of being able to sense the presenters' passion and enthusiasm evident in their body language and voice. They also mentioned that the style of the video (presenter speaking directly to camera) created a sense of personal interaction, as if the presenters were addressing them directly.

This does not necessarily mean that the presenter should always be speaking directly into the camera. In certain instances where a demonstration is necessary, it may be appropriate to focus on the apparatus being demonstrated and not show the presenter at all. The above emphasises the importance of visual identification in establishing a sense of rapport.

While the original idea of assigning learning styles using Grunewald et al.'s adaptation of Kolb's learning styles matrix failed due to a possible error in logic with the model and format in which the data were collected, this is not an indication that no relationship exists between learning styles and learner preferences in MOOCs. A cluster analysis revealed three natural groupings from the pre-course survey data – one of these groups had not yet participated in MOOCs. The remaining two groups – those who had previously participated in a MOOC – were divided according to their attitude towards social engagement in MOOCs.

The one group of learners strongly liked engaging in discussion and reading comments while the other group was neutral towards this type of social engagement. However, this is not an indication that the participants who were neutral toward discussion and reading comments are not "social learners". Some interview participants indicated that they did not enjoy engaging in the discussion forums because of the content quality of the

discussions, feeling that they did not have anything to add because participants were commenting mainly on the quality of the video and not engaging in meaningful conversation.

### **6.2.2 Which video production elements do MOOC participants regard as important?**

Most participants agreed that presenter style and content are important elements of video. This makes sense as the videos were all lecture videos and their main purpose was to deliver content. Also, presenter style is important for reasons mentioned in the previous section of this chapter. These are both non-technical aspects of video as defined earlier, which leans towards the emphasis being placed on pre-production and presenter training as opposed to the slickness of the video.

While there was agreement among interview participants about the importance of content and presenter style, there were varying opinions about some of the other elements of video considered in this study, i.e., visuals and location of the video. While some interview participants found additional visual images appealing, others felt that they could do without them. Similarly, while some participants found the location of the video added greatly to the overall experience, others found the location distracting or unnecessary.

There seems to be a strong element of personal preference about which video production elements participants deem important.

An interesting finding was the extent to which perception differed from reality in two of the video elements: video length and additional visuals. Video quality was correlated with the satisfaction with the different elements of video; however, with video length and additional visuals, both the actual number and satisfaction scores were recorded. While there was very weak

correlation between the actual length of video and actual number of visuals in a video and engagement, there was a moderately positive correlation between engagement and the satisfaction levels for video length and number of visuals. A logical explanation for this is that succinctness (of content) and relevance (of images and video footage) are more important than actual length and number of visuals. MOOC video producers should ensure that content is prepared beforehand in the form of a script or talking points to avoid verbosity and images should only be used where they are absolutely relevant to the video content.

### 6.2.3 How do these video production elements increase engagement?

This question was not answered in depth, or with great rigour. However, some findings about each of the video elements considered are listed below, and should be taken into consideration by MOOC designers:

**Presenter style:** Seeing the presenter helps to establish a connection between the learner and presenter. Also, the video style used in *Medicine and the Arts*, where the presenters spoke directly to camera, created the illusion for learners that presenters were speaking directly to them.

**Content:** Interesting content increases engagement for logical reasons. If learners are interested in the content, they are likely to be more engaged. Whether or not the content is interesting is, of course, subjective.

**Video length:** The effect of perceived video length was significantly different to the effect of actual video length. A possible explanation for this is that longer videos can seem short if the learner is engaged in the content, and shorter videos can seem longer if the learner is uninterested.

**Number of visuals:** Similarly to video length, the effect of perceived number of visuals and actual number of visuals were significantly different. Visuals have an effect on engagement when they are relevant to the content of the video.

**Location:** There were mixed opinions about the effect of video location on engagement. Some participants felt that it added context to the content of the video, whereas others found the background distracting. This seemed to be a matter of personal preference.

**Sound:** Satisfaction with sound quality had the highest correlation with video engagement. A few participants mentioned that they had problems with the sound; others said that the sound was perfectly fine. It is likely that good quality sound is a hygiene factor rather than a motivating factor. In other words, participants will complain when the quality is poor, but they will not be impressed when the sound is good because this is expected.

### 6.3 Limitations of the study

The context of this study, being the *Medicine and the Arts MOOC* on the FutureLearn platform, provides some limitation to generalising the findings of the research. *Medicine and the Arts* is a particular type of course. It is a humanities course, which generally takes on a different social dynamic to more technical courses such as engineering or mathematics.

Secondly, this course was run on the FutureLearn platform. As mentioned previously, FutureLearn emphasises the social aspect of learning in a MOOC by encouraging course designers to ask prompting questions after some of the videos and providing a space for discussion after every step. This is different to the set-up of the Coursera platform where discussions are usually separate from the course material. The study may, therefore, have contained some platform bias and so the findings should be generalised with caution.

Another limitation was the sample size of the video diary respondents. Even though there were 411 responses to the video diary questions given that there was generally around an average of three videos per week and the course was six weeks long, many respondents dropped out of the study as the course progressed. Out of the 43 respondents who indicated interest in the study, by the start of the course, 22 remained, and by the end of the course, there were only eight participants.

This limited sample means that, although there was sufficient data as a result of the number of responses, there was little representation from the 664 fully participating learners who completed the course.

In addition to the context specificity and the limited sample size, another limitation was the fact that this is a mini-thesis limited to 25 000 words. One area that could have been expanded on was how video production elements increase engagement. The interviews could have gone into more detail about the effect that the various elements of video had on engagement. However, I attempted to keep the length of the interviews to 30 minutes each so as to keep the word-count of the Analysis and Findings chapters down to meet the word limit. However, if the count were not limited to 25 000 words, I believe that probing deeper into these issues would have produced interesting results.

Another observation about the design of the study was that, for the most part, participants self-reported their opinions about how they thought they learnt best in MOOCs. However, I suspect from the interviews, that participants did not always know why they liked or disliked particular elements. Perhaps an observational study and/or additional in-depth interviews will provide more insightful results.

Lastly, quite a big limitation was that the intended framework, i.e., Grunewald's adaptation of Kolb's Learning Styles framework, turned out not to be a suitable framework for analysis of the findings of this study for reasons explained above. The use of a framework for analysis of the findings would have added academic rigour to the study. Activity Theory could potentially be a useful framework to study the role of video lectures in social learning/engagement in MOOCs.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

It is evident from the growth of MOOC platforms over the last few years and the emergence of models that allow for the sustainability of these types of courses that they seem to be here to stay. The criticism of the medium for occasional pedagogical thoughtlessness is also, however, valid, and MOOC designers have a responsibility to students to produce good quality products – especially if some people who choose to earn certificates are paying customers.

There is, however, much to be learnt regarding best practice for designing MOOCs, and since video plays such a key role in these courses, there is much to learn about producing good quality video lectures that engage students and promote learning. While this study identified that there are indeed personal preferences that separate learners regarding how they choose to learn in MOOCs, there is more insight to be gained as to why this is so. Similarly, while the study has confirmed the effect of video elements on engagement, little is known about the exact nature of how these elements affect engagement. This study concludes by outlining areas for future research.

## **6.5 Recommendations for future research**

While the original research design of using Grunewald's adapted version of Kolb's learning styles framework did not come together in the end for

reasons explained previously, the cluster analysis showed that natural groupings exist. These groups were defined based on respondents' preference for discussion and reading comments. What was not clear was the reason for this split. There are various possible reasons as to why respondents may like or dislike engaging in discussion. These may range from the bias of the FutureLearn platform towards social engagement, the level of discussion taking place in the forum and the type of course. Further research is necessary to better understand the clusters that were identified.

Another possible area for future research would be an investigation into whether the identified clusters were simply groups of individuals with similar preferences or whether they adopted the characteristics of any particular social learning theory such as Bandura's social learning theory that requires Attention, Retention, Motivation and Reproduction (McLeod, 2016).

While the current research shows that the identified elements of video have an effect on engagement, it fails to provide much detail about how each of the elements affects engagement. Additional research will provide deeper insights into which video elements positively affect engagement in MOOCs and how this happens.

It is recommended that these studies are conducted across different types of courses and different platforms to reduce bias.

**Word count:** 24981 (Chapter 1 – Chapter 6)

## 7. References

- Aguiar, E., Nagrecha, S. & Chawla, N. 2014. Predicting online video engagement using clickstreams. (Unpublished). Available: <http://arxiv.org/abs/1405.5147> [16 June 2015]
- Bates, A. 2015. Teaching in a digital age. *Glokalde*. 1(3).
- Bennett, S. & Oliver, M. 2011. Talking back to theory: the missed opportunities in learning technology research. *Research in Learning Technology*. 19(3):179-189.
- Bower, M. 2008. Affordance analysis: matching learning tasks with learning technologies. *Educational Media International*. 45(1):3-15.
- Brinton, C., Chiang, M., Jain, S., Lam, H., Liu, Z. & Wong, F. 2014. Learning about social learning in MOOCs: from statistical analysis to generative model. *Learning Technologies, IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies*. 7(4):346-359.
- Coffrin, C., Corrin, L., de Barba, P. & Kennedy, G. 2014. Visualizing patterns of student engagement and performance in MOOCs. *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Learning Analytics and Knowledge*. New York, NY, USA: ACM. 83.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. 2007. *Research methods in education*. Sixth ed. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. 2011. *Research Methods in Education*. Milton Mark ed. Abingdon, Oxon [England]: Routledge.
- Coursera Inc. 2014. *Earn a verified certificate with signature track*. Available: <https://www.coursera.org/signature/> [15 December 2015].
- Coursera Inc. 2014. *Learning how (not) to learn*. Available: <http://blog.coursera.org/post/93424900982/learning-how-not-to-learn> [18 January 2014].
- Coursera Inc. 2014. *Meet our partners*. Available: <https://www.coursera.org/about/partners> [24 August 2015].

- Coursera Inc. 2014. *Webcam and typing verification*. Available: <https://courserahelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/201212579-Webcam-Typing-Verification> [18 January 2015].
- Crowley, J. 2013. *cMOOCs: Putting collaboration first*. Available: <http://campustechnology.com/Articles/2013/08/15/cMOOCs-Putting-Collaboration-First.aspx> [4 February 2015].
- Denig, S. 2004. Multiple intelligences and learning styles: two complementary dimensions. *The Teachers College Record*. 106(1):96-111.
- Desmedt, E. & Valcke, M. 2004. Mapping the learning styles “jungle”: an overview of the literature based on citation analysis. *Educational Psychology*. 24(4):445-464.
- Dixson, M. 2012. Creating effective student engagement in online courses: What do students find engaging? *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. 10(2):1-13.
- Fasihuddin, H., Skinner, G. & Athauda, R. 2013. Boosting the opportunities of open learning (MOOCs) through learning theories. *Global Science and Technology Forum Journal on Computing*. 3(3):1-6.
- FutureLearn. 2014. *FAQ*. Available: <https://about.futurelearn.com/about/faq/?category=statements-of-participation> [15 December 2014].
- FutureLearn. 2014. *Partners*. Available: <https://www.futurelearn.com/partners> [15 December 2014].
- FutureLearn. 2015. *Statements of attainment by exam*. Available: <https://about.futurelearn.com/about/faq/?category=exams-and-statements-of-attainment> [18 January 2015].
- Garner, I. 2000. Problems and inconsistencies with Kolb's learning styles. *Educational Psychology*. 20(3):341-348.
- Giannakos, M., Chorianopoulos, K., Ronchetti, M., Szegedi, P. & Teasley, S. 2014. Video-based learning and open online courses. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*. 9(1):4-7.

- Graf, S., Liut, T. C. & Kinshuk. 2010. Analysis of learners' navigational behaviour and their learning styles in an online course. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. 26(2):116-131.
- Great Schools Partnership. 2014. *Student Engagement*. Available: <http://edglossary.org/student-engagement/> [6 January 2015].
- Grünewald, F., Meinel, C., Totschnig, M. & Willems, C. 2013. Designing MOOCs for the support of multiple learning styles. In *Scaling up learning for sustained impact*. Berlin: Springer. 371-382.
- Guo, P. & Reinecke, K. 2014. Demographic differences in how students navigate through MOOCs. *Proceedings of the First ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale Conference*. March 4-5 2014. Atlanta, Georgia: ACM. 21.
- Guo, P. J., Kim, J. & Rubin, R. 2014. How video production affects student engagement: an empirical study of MOOC videos. *Proceedings of the First ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale Conference*. 4-5 March 2014. Atlanta, Georgia, USA: ACM. 41.
- Hansch, A., Hillers, L., McConachie, K., Newman, C., Schildhauer, T. & Schmidt, P. 2015. Video and online learning: critical reflections and findings from the field. *HIIG Discussion Paper Series no. 2015-02*. 13 March 2015. HIIG Discussion Paper Series.
- Hartley, J. 2004. Case study research. In *Essential guide to quantitative methods in Organizational research*. Cassell, C. & Symon, G., Ed. SAGE. 323-333.
- Haug, S., Wodzicki, K., Cress, U. & Moskaliuk, J. 2014. Self-regulated learning in MOOCs: Do open badges and certificates of attendance motivate learners to invest more? *European MOOCs Stakeholder Summit. February 10-12*. U. Cress & C. Kloos, Eds. *Open Education Europa*. 66.
- Hawk, T. & Shah, A. 2007. Using learning style instruments to enhance student learning. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*. 5(1):1-19.
- Henn, M., Weinstein, M. & Foard, N. 2006. Ethics in social research. In *A Critical Introduction to Social Research*. London: Sage Publications. 77-108.

- Hew, K. & Cheung, W. 2014. Students' and instructors' use of massive open online courses (MOOCs): motivations and challenges. *Educational Research Review*. 12(2014):45-58.
- Hodkinson, P. & Hodkinson, H. 2001. The Strengths and Limitations of Case Study Research. In *Learning and Skills Development Agency Conference at Cambridge*. December, 2001.
- Hodgkinson-Williams, C. 2014. Presentation: validity. (Unpublished).
- Howard, S. & Maton, K. 2011. Theorising knowledge practices: a missing piece in the educational technology puzzle. *Research in Learning Technology*. 19(3):191-206.
- IBM. 2012. *Two step cluster analysis*. Available: [http://www.ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/SSLVMB\\_21.0.0/com.ibm.spss.statistics.help/idh\\_twostep\\_main.htm](http://www.ibm.com/support/knowledgecenter/SSLVMB_21.0.0/com.ibm.spss.statistics.help/idh_twostep_main.htm) [3 April 2016]
- Johnson, R. & Onwuegbuzie, J. 2004. Mixed methods research: a research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*. 33(7):14-26.
- Kalz, M. & Specht, M. 2013. If MOOCs are the answer: Did we ask the right questions? (Unpublished). Available: <https://ideas.repec.org/p/msm/wpaper/2013-25.html> [16 June 2016]
- Keengwe, J. & Kang, J. 2013. A triangular prism model: using activity theory to examine online learning communities. *Education & Information Technologies*. 24 February 2014. 18(1):85-93.
- Kim, J., Guo, P. J., Seaton, D. T., Mitros, P., Gajos, K. Z. & Miller, R. C. 2014. Understanding in-video dropouts and interaction peaks in online lecture videos. *Proceedings of the First ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale Conference*. 4-5 March 2014. Atlanta, Georgia, USA: ACM. 31.
- Komarraju, M., Karau, S., Schmeck, R. & Avdic, A. 2011. The big five personality traits, learning styles, and academic achievement. *Personality and Individual Differences*. 51(4):472-477.
- Korb, K. 2013. *Conducting educational research*. Available: <http://korbedpsych.com/R17aCode.html> [2 February 2016].

- Littlejohn, A. 2013. *Understanding massive open online courses*. New Delhi: Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia.
- Manolis, C., Burns, D., Assudani, R. & Burns, D. J. 2013. Assessing experiential learning styles: a methodological reconstruction and validation of the Kolb learning style inventory. *Learning and Individual Differences*. 23(2013):44-52.
- Maxwell, J. 2008. Designing a qualitative study. In *The Sage handbook of applied social research methods*. Bickman, L. & Rog, D. J., Eds. London: Sage. 214-253.
- McDonnell, F. P. & Hayden, R. 2012. The development and benefits of a work placement module in built environment related degree programmes. *Nted*. 30 March 2012. Valencia.
- McLeod, S. 2016. *Bandura: social learning theory*. Available: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/bandura.html> [3 April 2016]
- Meyer, D. & Avery, L. 2009. Excel as a qualitative data analysis tool. *Field Methods*. 21(1):91-112.
- Mørch, A. I., Moen, A., Hauge, T. E. & Ludvigsen, S. 2008. From knowledge management to technology-enhanced workplace learning: issues and examples. *The International Conference on E-Learning in the Workplace*. 12 - 13 June, 2008. New York: 1.
- Moser-Mercer, B. 2014. MOOCs in fragile contexts. *European MOOC Stakeholder Summit 2014*. 10-12 February. U. Cress & C. Kloos, Eds. eLearning Papers. 114. European MOOC Stakeholder Summit 2014.
- Murray, J. 2014. Participants' perceptions of a MOOC. *Insights: The UKSG Journal*. 27(2):154-159.
- Murthy, D. 2008. Digital ethnography: an examination of the use of new technologies for social research. *Sociology*. 42(5):837-855.
- Pappano, L. 2012. *The year of the MOOC*. Available: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/education/edlife/massive-open-online-courses-are-multiplying-at-a-rapid-pace.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/education/edlife/massive-open-online-courses-are-multiplying-at-a-rapid-pace.html?_r=0) [2 April 2016]

- Parr, C. 2015. 'Biggest-ever Mooc' starts on FutureLearn. Available: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/biggest-ever-mooc-starts-on-futurelearn/2020257.article> [1 February 2016].
- Perna, L., Ruby, A., Boruch, R., Wang, N., Scull, J., Evans, C. & Ahmad, S. 2013. The life cycle of a million MOOC users. (Unpublished). Available: [http://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/ahead/perna\\_ruby\\_boruch\\_moocs\\_dec2013.pdf](http://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/ahead/perna_ruby_boruch_moocs_dec2013.pdf) [16 June 2016]
- The Positive Psychlopedia. 2014. *Finding Your Happiness Fit and the New Frontiers: Week 9 of "The Science of Happiness" on edX*. Available: <http://positivepsychlopedia.com/tag/science-of-happiness/> [1 February 2016].
- Ramesh, A., Goldwasser, D., Huang, B., Daume III, H. & Getoor, L. 2014. Learning latent engagement patterns of students in online courses. *Twenty-Eighth AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence*. Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence. 1272.
- Reed, M., Evely, A. C., Cundill, G., Fazey, I., Glass, J., Laing, A., Newig, J., Parrish, B. et al. 2010. What is social learning? *Ecology and Society*. 15(5): pp.r1
- Shari, Z. & Soebarto, V. I. 2012. Delivering sustainable building strategies in Malaysia: stakeholders' barriers and aspirations. *Alam Cipta*. 5(2):3-12.
- Smart Technologies EMEA. 2011. *The history of technology in education* [DVD]. Smart Technologies EMEA.
- Talbert, R. 2012. *Screencasting for the inverted proofs class*. Available: <http://chronicle.com/blognetwork/castingoutnines/2012/07/13/screencasting-for-the-inverted-proofs-class/> [2 February 2016].
- TES Global Ltd 2014. *World university rankings 2014 -2015*. Available: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2014-15/world-ranking> [15 December 2014].
- Trumbore, A. 2014. Rules of engagement: strategies to increase online engagement at scale. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*. 46(4):38-45.

- Varis, P. 2014. Digital Ethnography. (Unpublished). Available:  
[https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/upload/c428e18c-935f-4d12-8afb-652e19899a30\\_TPCS\\_104\\_Varis.pdf](https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/upload/c428e18c-935f-4d12-8afb-652e19899a30_TPCS_104_Varis.pdf) [16 June 2016]
- Vieira, I., Lopes, A. & Soares, F. 2014. The potential benefits of using videos in higher education. *EDULEARN14 Conference*. 7-9 July 2014. Barcelona: IATED Publications. 0750.
- Vu, P. & Fadde, P. 2014. Rings of engagement: A model for MOOC enrollment. *Journal of Global Literacies, Technologies, and Emerging Pedagogies*. 2(3):240-247.
- Wang, H., Li, Y., Hu, X., Yang, Y., Meng, Z. & Chang, K. 2013. Using EEG to improve massive open online courses feedback interaction. *AIED Workshops*. Z. Pardos & E. Schneider, Eds. 59.
- Worrall, L., Harris, K., Stewart, R., Thomas, A. & McDermott, P. 2010. Barriers to women in the UK construction industry. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*. 17(3):268-281.
- Yousef, A. M. F., Chatti, M. A., Schroeder, U. & Wosnitza, M. 2014. What drives a successful MOOC?: an empirical examination of criteria to assure design quality of MOOCs. *Advanced Learning Technologies (ICALT), 2014 IEEE 14th International Conference on*. IEEE. 44.
- Zhang, D., Zhou, L., Briggs, R. O. & Nunamaker, J. F. 2006. Instructional video in e-learning: assessing the impact of interactive video on learning effectiveness. *Information & Management*. 43:15-27
- Zhang, L. & Sternberg, R. 2005. A threefold model of intellectual styles. *Educational Psychology Review*. 17(1):1-53.

## 8. Appendices

### 8.1 Appendix A – Pre-course survey questions

Q1 How did you find out about this course?

Q2 What do you hope to get out of this course? (Please tick all that apply.)

Q3 Please rate from "strongly dislike" to "strongly like" how you would like to learn on FutureLearn. (Please select one option for each row.)

Q4 Which of the following subject areas are you interested in? (Please tick all that apply.)

Q5 Have you taken a course delivered mostly or fully online before, including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)?

Q6 What sort of online course have you taken? (Please tick all that apply.)

Q7 Where do you expect to do the course? (Please tick all that apply.)

Q8 Please share any additional thoughts about your expectations of FutureLearn.

Q9 Which country do you live in?

Q10 What is your age group?

Q11 What is your gender?

Q12 Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

Q13 What is your current area of employment?

Q14 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Q15 What is your motivation for participating in this online course? (Please tick all that apply.)

Q16 How are you engaged with the healthcare system? (Please tick all that apply.)

Q17 Do you have a disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition, specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia), or other physical or

mental impairment?

Q18 What is your email address? (This should be the email address you used to sign up to FutureLearn.)

Q19 Would you like to be part of a FutureLearn review group? This means we may get in touch with you periodically to seek your views, opinions and feedback on specific topics.

## 8.2 Appendix B - Course diary questionnaire (Example – Week 2)

Link to [survey](#)

Q1. Please rate from "strongly dislike" to "strongly like" how you would like to learn on this online course. (Please select one option for each row.)

Q2. If you answered "I watched part of it" to any of the above, please indicate your reason for stopping the video. Choose n/a if you chose any of the other two options.

Q3. Step 2.1 Issues of children's voices: Please choose the degree to which the following statements are applicable:

The content was interesting

The presenter's style appealed to me

The quality of the video was good

The quality of the sound was good

The video was the right length

There were sufficient supporting visuals

The location of the video (Susan's office) added an element of interest

Q4. What did you do after you watched Step 2.1 Issues of children's voices?

Had a face-to-face conversation about the video content

Posted related material / made a comment on social media

Made a comment / engaged in discussion with other course participants

Attempted / completed the quiz / assignment

Comment on Step 2.1 Issues of children's voices

Q5. Step 2.3 My song for the living: Please choose the degree to which the following statements are applicable:

The content was interesting

The presenter's style appealed to me

The quality of the video was good

The quality of the sound was good

The video was the right length

There were sufficient supporting visuals

The location of the video (Red Cross Children's hospital) added an element of interest

Q6. What did you do after you watched Step 2.3 My song for the living:

Had a face-to-face conversation about the video content

Posted related material / made a comment on social media

Made a comment / engaged in discussion with other course participants

Attempted / completed the quiz / assignment

Comment on Step 2.3 My song for the living:

Q7. Step 2.4 Me and TB: children's accounts of tuberculosis and the clinic.

Please choose the degree to which the following statements are applicable:

The content was interesting

The presenter's style appealed to me

The quality of the video was good

The quality of the sound was good

The video was the right length

There were sufficient supporting visuals

The location of the video (Red Cross Children's hospital) added an element of interest

Q8. What did you do after you watched Step 2.4 Me and TB: children's accounts of tuberculosis and the clinic

Had a face-to-face conversation about the video content

Posted related material / made a comment on social media

Made a comment / engaged in discussion with other course participants

Attempted / completed the quiz / assignment

Comment on Step 2.4 Me and TB: children's accounts of tuberculosis and the clinic

Q9. Step 2.5 Giving voice to children's experiences Please choose the degree to which the following statements are applicable:

The content was interesting

The presenter's style appealed to me

The quality of the video was good

The quality of the sound was good

The video was the right length

There were sufficient supporting visuals

The location of the video (Red Cross Children's hospital) added an element of interest

Q10. What did you do after you watched Step 2.5 Giving voice to children's experiences

Had a face-to-face conversation about the video content

Posted related material / made a comment on social media

Made a comment / engaged in discussion with other course participants

Attempted / completed the quiz / assignment

Comment on Step 2.4 Me and TB: children's accounts of tuberculosis and the clinic

Q11. Step 2.6 In dialogue about children's voices

Please choose the degree to which the following statements are applicable:

The content was interesting

The presenter's style appealed to me

The quality of the video was good

The quality of the sound was good

The video was the right length

There were sufficient supporting visuals

The location of the video (Susan's office) added an element of interest

Q12. What did you do after you watched Step 2.6 In dialogue about children's voices

Had a face-to-face conversation about the video content

Posted related material / made a comment on social media

Made a comment / engaged in discussion with other course participants

Attempted / completed the quiz / assignment

Comment on Step 2.4 Me and TB: children's accounts of tuberculosis and the clinic

### 8.3 Appendix C – Post-course survey

Q1 Did you take part in the course once it had started?

Q2 What stopped you taking part in the whole course? (Please tick all that apply.)

Q3 Please rate from "strongly disliked" to "strongly liked" how you felt about learning on FutureLearn. (Please select one option for each row.)

Q4 How clear did you find the structure of the course (e.g. how far you had progressed, how much was left to do, what you should do next?)

Q5 Please rate from "strongly disliked" to "strongly liked" how you felt about the course design and content. (Please select one option for each row.)

Q6 To what extent did you find the educator(s) engaging?

Q7 How would you rate the level of the course?

Q8 What previous experience, if any, do you have in this subject area?

Q9 Roughly how often did you visit the course?

Q10 Roughly how much time did you spend on the course each time you visited?

Q11 How did you feel about the amount of time required by the course?

Q12 How did you feel about the length of the course?

Q13 Which devices did you use to study the course? (Please select one option for each row.)

Q14 Where did you do the course? (Please tick all that apply.)

Q15 To what extent did FutureLearn meet your expectations in terms of the following? (Please select one option for each row.)

Q16 What was your favourite part of the course, and why?

Q17 What was your least favourite part of the course, and why?

Q18 How could the course be improved?

Q19 Did you purchase a Statement of Participation for this course?

Q20 Why are you interested in a Statement of Participation?

Q21 If no, why not?

Q22 What would make a Statement of Participation more appealing to you?

Q23 How would you rate your overall experience of the course?

Q24 How likely would you be to recommend FutureLearn to a friend?

Q25 How will you pursue your interest in the subject now that the course is complete? (Please tick all that apply.)

Q26 Thinking back to the all videos you have watched in this course, please rate how likely you were to finish watching a video. (Please select one option for each row.)

Q27 Thinking specifically to the videos you did not finish watching, please rate how likely you were to stop watching a video. (Please select one option for each row.)

Q28 What will you take away from this online course, even if you only finish some parts? (tick all that apply)

Q29 How soon would you like to do another FutureLearn course?

Q30 What is your email address? (This should be the email address you used to sign up to FutureLearn.)

Q31 What stopped you taking part in the course? (Please tick all that apply.)

## 8.4 Appendix D – Interview script

1. Chit chat

2. Introduction and Background

Thank you again for taking the time to allow me to interview you.

Just as a brief background about myself and the research. In my professional capacity, I'm a learning designer involved in the design and production of the University of Cape Town's first free online courses - so that's why you may have seen me on the FutureLearn platform in the discussion forums. Then in my private capacity, I'm also a student conducting my Master's research on how different styles of video and different approaches can affect engagement in these online courses. So I just wanted to let you know that I'm doing this research in my capacity as a student.

I also just want to let you know that I'm recording our conversation to help me make sense of your responses at a later stage, also in relation to other interviewee responses. I will use the responses for analysis purposes, but I'm also obliged to make them available as an appendix to my dissertation - but they will be anonymised. I'm also happy to send you the transcripts so that you can ensure that I'm portraying what you say fairly and in an unbiased way. Are you happy for me to go ahead with the recording?

3. So as you may or may not know, the *Medicine and the Arts: Humanising Healthcare* course was UCT's first free online course and I just wanted to get a general sense for how you found the course.

4. What did you think about the videos in the course? (both in terms of quality and content)

5. Now I'd like to get a bit more specific. Can you think of a specific video / a specific style of video that stood out for you? (If mention positive, prompt for negative as well and vice versa)

6. Bearing in mind your answer to the previous question, what do you think makes a good lecture video? And can you think of the factors that absolutely need to be there vs the factors that are nice to have?

(Cover things like presenter's style; video style etc. - don't prompt if they don't mention)

7. As you know we are a university, and although we would like to distribute free knowledge to everyone, everywhere it obviously needs to be sustainable from a resource point of view - both financial and people resources. bearing this in mind, what do you think - from a video perspectives are the frills, that we could get away with excluding, and still have an equal amount of impact?

8. Have you done other online courses? And how do you like to learn in online courses, so take me through the way you navigate courses like M&A. (Read, watch, engage?)

9. Think about M&A as a whole course - including the videos, the text beneath the videos, the quizzes, assignments, readings and the opportunity for social interaction. What role do you think video played in bringing the course together and why?

10. If you didn't watch the video, would you still have...

## 8.5 Appendix E – Interview transcripts

**Respondent 1 of 8 – Adrienne**

**Date: Monday 1 June**

---

**Adrienne:** Hello

**Mary-Ann:** Hello, is that Adrienne?

**Adrienne:** Yes!

**Mary-Ann:** Hi Adrienne, it's Mary-Ann here, how are you doing?

**Adrienne:** I am doing good, I've been walking around with the phone in my hand 'cos I don't trust me.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh, Shame.

**Adrienne:** I would think of something brilliant to do upstairs and miss it so it's like – just wait.

**Mary-Ann:** Wonderful, so it seems like the weather is playing it's part and not being too stormy, is it?

**Adrienne:** No, it's starting tonight but they've lowered the heat from the 80s to the 70s which will decrease the storm and we're at the edge of it.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, so it won't be too bad for you then?

**Adrienne:** Hopefully, but we get some interesting storms here, so who knows?

**Mary-Ann:** Yeah, they are a bit unpredictable aren't they?

**Adrienne:** They are, they are.

**Mary-Ann:** Good. So Adrienne thank you so much for taking the time to allow me to interview you. I really do appreciate it and also your enthusiasm as we've corresponded has been very refreshing. Because usually I have to beg people to give me some of their time, so thank you very, very much for giving me...

**Adrienne:** You are very welcome

**Mary-Ann:** Great, thank you. Ok, so just to start off, I just wanted to give you a brief background about myself and about the research. So in my professional capacity, I'm a learning designer and I was involved in the design and production of Medicine & the Arts Medicine & the Arts Medicine & the Arts – so of the actual course and that's why you may have seen me on the platform, on FutureLearn in the discussion forums and such.

But then in my private capacity, I'm also a student, so I'm doing my masters research on how different video styles and different elements of video contribute to a learning process and affect engagement in online courses. So I just wanted to let you know that I'm doing my research in a separate capacity as a student rather than as a representative of the university.

And then I also wanted to ask your permission to record this session because my masters dissertation requires me to submit transcripts of all the interviews that I do with my research participants so I just wanted to make sure that that's ok with you and to let you know that if you wish that I can send you the transcript once it's been transcribed just to make sure that what you're saying is actually what you are saying. If that makes you feel more comfortable. But I'm more than happy to do that, I'm not going to...

**Adrienne:** Well let's put it this way. If you go back and look at it and you say: "What was Adrienne saying here?" you send it to me. Otherwise I think it will be fine. And yes you have permission.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you very, very much. Ok, so just to start off, I just wanted to – I know you were very vocal in the course, and I just wanted to get your general impressions of what you experienced and felt about the course as a whole.

**Adrienne:** I participated more in that course than any of the courses I have done and most of mine have been on Coursera. But this particular course – medical humanities - was safe. And I saw that in other people too. The amount of information so many of us put out there, said over and over, "This is a safe place to be who I am." And that was profound. And that's the one thing I came away with is I found a six week platform where I could be the best of Adrienne without somebody questioning me. Why I didn't think the way they did. Where my poetry was enjoyed and my form of expression was shared. And so that was a real blessing to me.

And that came not just from the participants of the class, but for the most part that came from all except the one idiot that you had. I don't know what his problem was but he made everything else look so much better. And so that

helped and I find that the course changed me for the better. And I don't know that I can define the what, I know because my background is with severely and profoundly handicapped or really psychiatricly disturbed adults, handicapped kids – that her excitement validated the effort I put in for years.

And the engineer guy that thinks every morning? Yes, there's one other person in this world that does that. It's like the African lady Judith that I connected with, she and I have something very similar in common. It's like I knew I couldn't be the only one on earth. But it took somebody from Zimbabwe to be the only other person I've heard describe what I live on a daily basis. So I don't know if I would have recognised that as clearly though without the journey that I've personally taken and the way the course allowed me to express myself.

**Mary-Ann:** Wow, so it feels like the course really had an impact for you – a real impact on your life. And that's wonderful to hear. That really is.

**Adrienne:** Usually it's just mental. Learning facts and regurgitating them back. And I got to think and ponder and engage with others. That course was everything that an online course should be and could be. I'm amazed at that course.

**Mary-Ann:** Wonderful. I'm glad that you felt that way. Adrienne, I just want to get a little bit more specific in terms of the videos – but still generally speaking, what did you think about the videos in the course in terms of quality and content and everything like that?

**Adrienne:** Overall, they were really good. There was one week that had some audio things that I mentioned. But for me because I'm very kinesthetic, I'm very visual, the ones with nothing behind them were probably the best for

me because like when Susan was in her office, it's like, what's that title of that book, what is that, and my brain kept going all over, I finally just had to listen and just not watch it. But that's just me.

**Mary-Ann:** So for you, you're saying that the extra visuals were distracting rather than adding to the experience.

**Adrienne:** The books and stuff. I wouldn't call an office be an extract. For me it was because I like books. So for me it was, I think the one that just had really no background that really impacted me was the guy that... The really tall skinny guy that talked about making the kangaroo pouches, the little heart monitor thingy. Yeah – because it was like show and tell

**Mary-Ann:** That was Francois Bonnici

**Adrienne:** Right, right. And because he did some show and tell, I learnt more from him than those that just stood there. The ones that were – I liked the autopsy, but that's just kind of me. I mean, my art is – I have gone from bones to muscle, so that was just kind of neat for me. I actually copied a couple of them said, oh... that's how they lay. So overall I really like 'em. I was yeah – they weren't too busy in that they weren't over busy but some of them I'm guessing would have been under-busy for people who needed more stimulus

**Mary-Ann:** And you mentioned Francois Bonnici's video with the show and tell that you really enjoyed. Are there any other videos that really stood out for you? Both in a negative and in a positive light.

**Adrienne:** Kate's did. And having the opportunity...She was so ... her wording was so invested in the little bit we saw of the buildings. The gal that did the radio - It was having those links to listen to that were really profound.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, so you're saying quite a bit here. You're saying that it was in Nina's case specifically, you're saying that it was the video, but then coupling the video with the links of the children's interviews. You're saying that it was those two things together that made an impact. Is that what you're saying?

**Adrienne:** Yeah, her video alone didn't really do much for me, but then I listened to the links and I went back and the video was more alive to me – after I had listened to them. So for her it was really a twist. The heart guy was just I don't know – I don't know what he was, drunk or arrogant. I don't know what he was but I still have nothing good to say about him. I felt like he was talking down to us and he thought we were all stupid.

**Mary-Ann:** Are you talking about the Week 3 now? I know you did give some feedback...

**Adrienne:** The one that I just gave all zeros to. It was so negative to me, I couldn't give it any points.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, no – sure I understand that.

**Adrienne:** Yeah, but it was that, it was that he came across so arrogant and he came across as if we were really too stupid to understand anything he was saying. And it stood out so much in that course that invited us as thinkers, and intelligent human beings to come in and enjoy and to help, to share our experience. And then there was him in the middle. It was like wait a minute here. So he by far was the negative. And I got to go with the thinker

as the best just because he was such a delight and then the other guy that he did and then Kate, those were by far the best ones for me. And the rest were all more than adequate

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, great. And I don't want to harp on the negative too much, but just in terms of Mark's video, the one that you didn't enjoy. You mentioned that he was just so arrogant. Would you say that it was his style, or the way he was speaking or the content? What about what he was saying just really got to you?

**Adrienne:** Ok, one of the things I do, and I just do it for me, partly because I .... Is I download the text the transcripts and articles and stick them in a text document, and I just read through them on my Kindle so that when I go, my brain can go play with some things 'cos I still know what's being said. I struggled just reading his. It was like the presumption was like we were too ignorant to understand him. The video itself, and I think I mentioned this and it was like there were daggers between he and Susan. I don't know what was going on but it was just like a very angry divorce going on between the two of them and he came across like he did not want to be there, he did not want to talk to us and I went back and listened to him too and it was, even when I took out that with just his voice, there was just an attitude that came through.

So it was more of the attitude that I experienced and he was just like so tense when he was talking, It was like he was in me and I tried to move that out, I tried to get rid of everything I could before I gave him all zeros and I couldn't. I just could not. Most of the time I run into something like that in a course and I just quit. It's like I can find somebody else, I do not do this to be insulted. And that's pretty bad because I very seldom will just stop a course. I may go in and look at it and decide it's not what I want and get out, but normally I'll just put up. I mean I'm doing one now and I just get tired of the

arrogance of a couple of posters. So I'm finishing the course, I'm just not posting.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure. So that's very interesting Adrienne, you said that normally something like that could make you stop a course, what made you carry on with this one?

**Adrienne:** Because of everybody else

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, so everything else was sufficient to make you think, let's carry on, the rest of the course is not going to be like this:

**Adrienne:** Yeah, it was kind of that point of you know, it was like an anomaly, you know Susan was just like gushing over this guy, and I'm like I'm not sure why, 'cos I haven't heard ya'll gush about anybody else. And it was like you know, I don't know what was going on. Even the heart guy was, you know, more human. I don't know what it was there, but I could not just walk away because of that one guy, I had to go on.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, sure, And I'm glad that you did.

**Adrienne:** I am too because it was fun, I had a laugh, I had a chuckle at the gal that does the photography, 'cos I do art in that way I've gone backwards, people do art with social media and high cameras and I'm going back to a pencil.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, wonderful. No that's good feedback, thank you. The other thing I wanted to ask you was also specifically about the videos, because as you know, we're a university, and although we'd like to distribute our

knowledge free to everyone, everywhere, obviously it needs to be sustainable from a resource point on our side. Both financially and people resource wise. So bearing this in mind, if you can think about the videos and think about the quality of production, do you think that there's a way that if we had taken away all of the frills. For example, you mentioned in your case that the plain background is better for you because you don't get distracted, but if for example, the quality of the video was not as good. Say we used the presenter in their office space with a white wall background or with a plain background with no distractions, how would that have taken away from the experience, or not for you?

**Adrienne:** I like them in their office even though it distracts me and I have to go back maybe because it makes them, it's like sitting in their office talking to a prof. And that is a profound experience. I'm taking a course right now and the guy is sitting at his desk sometimes but he's looking so into the camera, I don't feel like I'm sitting in his office talking to him. You captured that ability in the offices that I was sitting there having a conversation with a prof. And that was profound. One thing I think would have helped when you did just the plain background is if you had – do not do white – not white – but there were all that brighter blue. If that had been different, if some of them had been orange or some of them had been green, if there had been a variety with those, that would have added and the one where, ok I think it was with the transplant, if instead of the just always being in there with the dummies laying out, if it had gone back and forth you know like a plainer background and then a shot of that instead of just having me look at pretend, I struggled with that and I'm not sure how other people would have felt. But it's like you wanted to go poke them or something so they'd move. It's like move, do something! It was too phony, I guess.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, so you'd say staged, in a way.

**Adrienne:** And so if it would have started there with maybe kind of a panorama shot of the room and then gone to the person, you kind of did that with the poet. Where there were just a few shots of the room but then you focused on him. And that made it easier. So, but overall, I was... I've taken 16... probably close to 20 courses from US platforms and usually, the only time I see what I saw, what you guys accomplished is in the intro video. Then you get in there, and it's like I don't want to stare at your ugly mug, go walk outside, show me things. There was one on Cryptoguard that I saw that the guy went into his city a lot, he went into the home of Cryptoguard and into the library and so that you felt like you were visiting the city. And I guess the one thing I would add for some of them even if it was instead of the plain background, even just a shot of the window, you know, 'cos most of us don't have any clue really what it looks like in Cape Town. And so that would have... even if it had been just a still shot of the ocean behind him. It would have brought us more into the area.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you, that makes a lot of sense.

**Adrienne:** I didn't know I thought all of these things

**Mary-Ann:** Well I'm glad that you have

**Adrienne:** I am, I just haven't given it that much thought. I guess I have I just haven't expressed it

**Mary-Ann:** And then you mentioned that you did more than 16 other online courses, so you're quite an experienced online learner. You said something earlier about copying all the transcripts and then reading the transcripts before you watch the videos. And it sounds like a very interesting process that you've got going. Do you mind talking me through that process of how

you actually learn in an online course including the transcripts and the videos and the social interaction and how you manage all of that in the courses that you take?

**Adrienne:** In general?

**Mary-Ann:** In general and then if you can bring it back to this course if it was any different, I would like to hear that as well

**Adrienne:** Thinking.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure, take your time.

**Adrienne:** I take a variety of courses, my one goal with a course is that it's something I'm not an expert in. And so I've taken economics and I'm such a non-expert that in college I kept throwing my book out the window. It was making me mad. My very first course was on justice. It was a philosophy course. And it was something I've always been interested in, but I didn't have the time. I tend to do medical or genetics during the summer. And I did [programmed cell] during the summer which was when I really started copying the notes because the only thing she talked about in 10 weeks that I had learned in college was Mendel and his peas and everything else had been found after the fact and I still by the way got distinction of 83% on that but that was a half time job. I'm looking at one on epigenetics for this summer and I tend to do those during the summer and I have no idea why. But those courses require me to do more than just listen to someone talking or listen and reading the captions. There is so much information that I'm trying to catch up on and by taking them often, some courses I'll just read through the whole week first just to get a sense of where they're going. Others – like I'm doing one on China and Korea right now and it's on so much stuff that I don't

know that I'll read one and he stuffs so much into each one, I'll read one or two and then I'll go watch them. And then I may re-read them again

**Mary-Ann:** So are you saying that you don't always watch the videos?

**Adrienne:** I always watch them; I very seldom will watch them first. And some videos then I will download but that's usually because it's got graphics that I think I will want that honestly I never go back and look at. So I'm not sure why I go and do that. That's my college mode. I get into my college learning. But for me, having an idea of where the week is going helps me when I go into each one.

**Mary-Ann:** So you like to have a sense of the bigger picture?

**Adrienne:** I do. I like the bigger picture and then I break it down which is really interesting you put it that way because I do not live my life that way. I do not take the big picture and deduct anything. I like to see it. But then I start at the little pieces and work back up to it. So I'm very inductive in my.. I'm very deductive I guess. I like to deduce things and come up. Rather than have the whole and come apart. It's like going to the ocean. It gives me a picture of the water and the sand. And then I go down there and I walk and I play and I look at all the little pieces. The shells and the driftwood and the people and all of that and from all of those, I look again and I see the whole thing then but I have to do it both ways to grasp it.

I'm doing a self-paced class right now that doesn't have transcripts to download and the guy has a very strong Chinese-British accent. I'm like wait a minute, what are you saying? And it frustrates me that I can't download. Mostly because I'm not grasping enough information. For me - I'm passing the tests. I'm getting the quizzes all right. There's little essays in the middle, I'm doing fine on those. But I'm not grasping what this lover of learning wants to get out of the course so I take those notes and I keep them and I put them

all into one and then it's like I've gone back and I just kind of added them into my kindle or whatever and I'll just read slowly through that information again and just ponder my way through because I have all of that other information now so I can read that. Which just kind of amazes me that I do that. Most people don't do that.

**Mary-Ann:** You did mention that word quite a number of times I noticed in your surveys that you filled out for me. You mentioned the word ponder a lot. Is that something that you do a lot in relation to the courses you take?

**Adrienne:** It's something I do about everything in life. I just ponder. I'm a thinker. And I like to think about things whether they're the courses or whether they're painting the walls inside. I'm doing some painting on the outside and I have a friend that just laughs. She just listens to years of ponder and I mean my latest email turned into, well I can't paint 'cos the house wants more stain, it doesn't want paint and now I know what my house wants and now I've kind of come back to where I started 3 years ago when I went back to there because when I painted the inside, I knew what needed to be done, I knew why I needed to do it. And that why impelled me. But outside, I was, this morning I was looking well I know what I want to do – the what. But I didn't know why I want to do it and I drew a complete blank, I still got a complete blank. And so it's like OK back off. This needs to be done and that needs to be done so just do that. I have no idea what I get caught up into but for me I need principles. And I think in part it was because I wasn't raised with them. I had some early on but I had a really challenging life too. And so principles are really important to me. They're kind of my guideposts. And so that's part of my pondering, but I just love to think. And I do, the guy that talked about it, he described me.

**Mary-Ann:** Alireza, the professor with grey hair?

**Adrienne:** Alireza, yeah the engineer. That finally started doing that and writing and taking time to process his thoughts. And I find that since I've started doing that, I did it intermittently but now that I've been consistent for about, I've written 3 pages every morning for almost 8 months now. Going on 10 months. And it's not, forget what I write about, just the fact that I'm doing it, has made a profound change. It's giving a place, it's given prominence, it's given value to my thoughts so then I can just kind of go out and live my life and that's basically what he was saying. He was affirming what I was beginning to understand, that I need that. Thinkers need a place to put those thoughts because most people don't want to listen to them so.

**Mary-Ann:** I hear what you're saying. I can relate.

**Adrienne:** Yeah, so in all my courses, it started that I had to take the transcripts and try to figure out what the science was saying and that kind of became a habit, it allows me to go in and enjoy. By downloading the transcripts it was easier for me to see the office setting of Susan or what's his name? Dean, Dave?

**Mary-Ann:** Steve.

**Adrienne:** Ok, and then I could look at what was in that office, and I could be present in that conversation.

**Mary-Ann:** Without missing anything because you've already got the content.

**Adrienne:** Yeah. And I didn't really study it, I just read it so that I could follow though and I could stop and go "but what about..." and I do that when I read. I get a lot of my ponders by downloading them first. I'll be reading and I'm like "wait a minute, what about" and I may stop it then and let some back end of

my brain just ponder that out I may look at some things and come back. And so that allows me to get all those thoughts out so that when I enter into I can be more engaged.

**Mary-Ann:** And then the other thing I wanted to ask you Adrienne was if you've got a strategy or if you've got a particular way of dealing with the social aspect of the course and the social interaction. How did you find that aspect?

**Adrienne:** I do far more of that on FutureLearn than I do on any of the rest of them altogether. And one of the reasons is there's less American arrogance. And there just is. You know and there is. And there's this one guy there and part of me wants to go back and see if he just smarts off to women [... and say] do you ever talk to men this way? And It doesn't matter. I just kind of ignore him. 'Cos he's not an expert he just thinks he knows more than women and so that's fine so I started posting less there. FutureLearn is set up where posting is more natural. The others you have to go to a special place to get to them and on edX [it is] totally idiotic, it's just like pushing buttons.

**Mary-Ann:** So you find it more natural to comment and to engage in discussion on FutureLearn, that's interesting.

**Adrienne:** Well, it's right there, you get down, you mark it read, you go to next and you see that there are other commenters and you can go. And it also allows me to filter who, which I don't. It's kind of like I'm more apt to just check replies if I've been posting or go to activity and interact with new ones rather than just... I mean it's like I don't want to keep hearing what you have to say. I mean I really like you but that's not why I'm on the course, I'm there for the variety of that interaction, and that's allowed me to interact more.

One of the things I've realized with FutureLearn though is – except with Medical Humanities - it didn't take as long for people to jump in on that course. Other courses it takes a long time. They may say Hi I'm' so and so from here and here, but then there really isn't any meat. This course, people jumped in that first week, a lot sooner. But we were invited to. Yeah, we were invited to share what we thought. The one course I took from FutureLearn on WWI did that really well too, but it still took a while. That was only 3 weeks, but it took until the second week to really get people talking and involved and I find it can be helpful. But it's really different. But I just kind of went off of all social media so it's just kind of an interesting experiment for me.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you Adrienne. I think the last question I really wanted to ask you is about you touched on how you were to interact with the different parts of the course. But if you can think about what the role of the video was in getting you to do the other stuff. How the videos prompted you to do other things.

**Adrienne:** In Medical humanities, the prompts actually came from the excitement of the lecturers. That's where it came from. It wasn't so much because. I mean in part it was because it was open and saying well what do you think, what was your experience. And that was there, but most of it was because the vast majority, minus one, actually had conversations with us. So I got to spend most of the time in an internship in Cape Town in your university, talking one-on-one and listening to all these different specialists and it was their excitement. I don't see professors usually so open to learn from their students. That was very unique on this course and I think that that also brought me in and it wasn't so much just answering the questions, it was they were excited to teach and they were excited to learn from us.

And this guy who's doing Lips and Teeth on China and Korea, he's like that. He's just totally fascinated at the conversations that are occurring, but those in his course and... that's really kinda. The older history there better... getting into the Korean war and we have people who think they know all the answers and it hasn't been fought long enough for us to figure all the answers out yet. But your course brought in history ad new and old and it was like all of the professors were... none of them had arrived yet. They were all learners with us.

**Mary-Ann:** I think that is something that really also struck me whenever we met with Susan and Steve, that's something that they would say. "We don't have all the answers and this discussion on the course is really building knowledge for the field, it's not our knowledge that we're imparting on students, it's a collaborative exercise of building knowledge and contributing to the discipline." So that was I would say one of the (and I'm speaking for Susan and Steve here) core aims of what the course was trying to achieve so it's nice to hear you say that.

**Adrienne:** And you did achieve that and I went online looking for some of the things that they started learning, I looked outside of that and I looked for Medical Humanities here, and it's almost a foreign term. And you do find it, all of this listed as a course, you know, it has no life here. And for me it had a beating pulse to it. And it had arms and legs and you were moving and incorporating all these different things and I don't know how you can have modern day humanities without that. But we do it really well as dead here. Very flat faced, very linear. It's kind of amazing that some people get really frustrated, they question why I take courses from outside of the US, and I'm like well why not? All of these astounding universities and learn so many things and it's just if you look at heart transplants here, if you Google, you're going to have a really hard time bringing you guys up. We're gonna talk about the one in Utah, we're gonna talk about this one, and it's so weird, so idiosyncratic, it's really hard. Truly hard for me who is not that way. You guys

allow me free vacations of learning. You take me in a museum and I don't have to learn about these tall people that are blocking my view, I get to see upfront because you're allowing me to see upfront what is there. And for me that's one of the greatest gifts that online learning can provide students.

You can take us in, you can take us into an autopsy. You can take us into the transplant in ways that if we were down there walking around, we would not see what we saw in the videos, and that is the profoundness of online learning. That you allow us to see what we are not able to see.

Even as a visitor you know you wouldn't be high on the list of where people would take us. No university is. It's just not high on there and they would drive by and say "Oh, that was where the first transplant happened" and they keep going to wherever they go to, which is why I don't go on those. I would be lost in museums and in universities to see what was happening and you allow me to do that in a way that I wouldn't if I came in person.

**Mary-Ann:** Great. Well I'm really glad that you got so much value out of it and it sounds like you really have. So I think that's all I wanted to ask you. Did you have anything else to add?

**Adrienne:** Medical Humanities was overall, my most favourite course.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh wow, I'm so glad to hear you say that. That's really touching actually. Because it was our first course to make.

**Adrienne:** You know, others I really liked for different reasons, but you touched so many parts of me and in the midst of all that, you taught me... but it was that it goes back to that openness. Yours was an engagement rather than a teaching and that was profound. The offering came at a perfect

time for me and where I was on my own journey and so that was just probably why what his name irritated me so much. I have enough people here irritating me, I don't need that from you.

But he also brought a balance that made the course real. Without him, as much as I disliked him, it wouldn't have been as real of a course. He made the human in the humanities.

But overall that's it, I enjoyed your weekly thing that was funny, I'd look at it and I'm like let's see, let's go back and glance, I had to go back and just look at the page of the week to remember. Except the one where the audios were a little different. Then I made some notes so I could hopefully know which ones they were and by the end it seemed kind of they were in two different places and they didn't do an audio check, that's what it looked like. But that was just because I was paying attention to that. Your questions had me pay attention in another way. You asked me to use my analytic brain. And it's really active in me. You just kind of hit every part of me. It hit the learner and the teacher and the artist and the poet the humanities and then you asked my analyst to show up once a week and participate and so all of me got incorporated and that is a rare gift.

**Mary-Ann:** Well thank you, your input and your analyst as you say was really gift to me 'cos I think I got a lot out of this session. So thank you very, very, very, very, very much.

**Adrienne:** I'm smiling

**Mary-Ann:** So am I. So thank you Adrienne, I appreciate your time and your openness and your willingness to give us some good, honest feedback. It really is appreciated.

**Adrienne:** It was my privilege to be able to do that and it was your interaction with me that allowed me to know that I could do that. Most of them that I have seen have been from here and they may not be a US course, but they're on a US platform, and it's like. One shot, yes or no, do this this or that and they're done. And I'm like, that's not nice, I don't know why you're doing it, you know - it's usury. And you came across saying come help us, just like the rest of them. So it was as much the way yours was put together as anything that kept me on board. Although I would have. I don't say yes easily, and when I do, I follow through. I'm very disciplined that way. I'm very cheap depending on what it is. I'm a very disciplined person, I like discipline and so following through and knowing that that would come was just something I could add to my life. And I found I really enjoyed doing your form. And it was just fun to help somebody do their masters. I haven't got to do that since I moved back here 11 years ago. So that was fun.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you. I do appreciate it

**Adrienne:** You're welcome. It's been nice having you in my life

**Mary-Ann:** Same here. And good luck with the storms if they do come, stay dry – I think.

**Adrienne:** I tend to...if the storms are really bad I stay in, but if it's just raining I walk. I call them my cheap vacation. People call me an idiot or extraordinarily disciplined and all these other things. It's just that if you walk in the rain, you hydrate your insides. You get to breathe in all that fresh, moist air. But I call it my Oregon vacation. Sometimes it's so foggy here, that you just know that the ocean's on the other side of those houses. The only thing we don't have is the smell of seaweed, so I tend to walk in there but that's ok. I got my walk in this morning. I got my 5 and a half road miles. I'm

like 5 foot so every 4 and a half miles I walk I step off an additional mile. I ended up closer to seven miles. My feet tell me it was seven miles – they're like excuse me! But anyhow, it's good and it's fun, and thank you, thank you so much. It was good to hear your voice.

**Mary-Ann:** Great stuff. Thank you Adrienne, and have a good rest of the day and week.

**Adrienne:** I will, and let me know how it goes when you get it all together.

**Mary-Ann:** I will do, thank you so much.

**Adrienne:** You're welcome.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, bye-bye now. Take care – bye.

**Adrienne:** You too. Bye-bye

**Respondent 2 of 8 – Dean**

**Date: Tuesday 2 June**

---

**Dean:** Hello, Dean Cameron speaking.

**Mary-Ann:** Hi Dean, this is Mary-Ann here, how are you?

**Dean:** Well thank you and yourself?

**Mary-Ann:** I'm very well, thank you. Thank you for agreeing to speak to me this morning even though you've got to rush off to the airport. I know you don't have a lot of time. So I suppose we can get right into it. Just before we start I wanted to give you some background about myself and my research. In my professional capacity I'm a learning designer at UCT and I worked on the Medicine and the Arts course that you completed but this research that I'm doing is in my personal capacity as a student. I'm doing my Masters research on video and how video can enhance learning and engagement in these massive open online courses. So I just wanted to let you know first of all that I'm doing the research in my capacity as a student and then also to ask your permission if it would be possible for me to record this call if you're ok with that.

**Dean:** Sure, yes. No problem.

**Mary-Ann:** Wonderful. And if you would like, I am more than happy to send you the transcript so that you know that I'm posting the correct transcript and not making up things that you say. So if you are keen I can send that to you once it's done.

**Dean:** If you want to. I'm fairly familiar with doing research and so on. As you like. I don't mind.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure. Thank you Dean, I appreciate it. I think the first thing I wanted to ask you is just to get a general sense of how you found the Medicine & the Arts course in a general sense and in relation to other courses that you have done so far.

**Dean:** Yes, this is the first time that I've done a course like this. This MOOC type thing. And it was quite frenetic - you no sooner got into one little topic and there was something else and so on. That was interesting but you just couldn't get into the meat of the problem. But I thought it was very innovative and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I don't do social media. I don't do Facebook or any of that sort of jazz. I don't have a Whatsapp thing, it's just spam for me. So I've got that prejudice against people chattering about inane nonsense and some of the participants were just off on their own thing and I found that irritating – but that is part of it I suppose - but then there was some other delightful insights and where people really reflected and so on and I came away with it very positive. Some parts obviously worked better than others. And ya, I enjoyed it. It's time consuming. I mean if you're really going to put time into it, it takes a lot of time. And at the time I was in the process of retiring from my job, moving to Cape Town and sorting out things here so it was quite a busy time for me. But ya, despite that I enjoyed it. I actually bumped into Steve Reid at the airport last week – we had a little chat. I mean Steve's great, I've known Steve for many years and he's full of fun. So it's good to see somebody doing something totally outrageous and different. It was great.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh, so you actually knew Steve from before the course?

**Dean:** Yes, I've known him for years and years and years.

**Mary-Ann:** Did you work in the hospital?

**Dean:** No I worked in rural health and Steve is in rural health so we bumped into each other at conferences and things.

**Mary-Ann:** Wonderful. Ok, thanks Dean. So the other question I wanted to ask you just to get a little more specific. So what did you think about the videos in the course both in terms of quality and in terms of content?

**Dean:** Yes, quality was great .I had no problems with the thing I thought it added a great dimension and I thought seeing the people that you're interacting with was great. So the use of video was excellent. They were short, they were to the point and they got the message across so I thought that added a really personal aspect to it. So that was fine.

**Mary-Ann:** You mentioned seeing the people. Did it make a difference to you, the style... person to person, did that make a difference?

**Dean:** Oh yes, I like seeing somebody's face and it helps me relate to them.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, good. I'm like that too. I like to put a face to a voice or a name, but did you find that – because there were loads of presenters, I think there were 17 in total. Did you find that it mattered more with some than with others or was it just putting the face to the voice or the content that helped you through the course? What I was trying to understand was – is it a

specific style, or an attitude or a something about the presenter themselves, or is it just the fact that they are there?

**Dean:** No. Their style of presenting is obviously very important. You know, you can pick up emotion, body language. Their passion for what they're doing. All sorts of things come through. And I think that's important to see. I think apart from the presenter, some of the visual images were very interesting. Some were irrelevant. But I mean for instance, the one on the mosaic, those AIDs things are brilliant. That is fantastic. You know that stimulates your thinking. And some of the other stuff was also relevant. Ya, I thought it was innovative and great.

Obviously, some of the presenters were more comfortable being videoed and some understand that you can't put ten years theory into one little couple of minute videos. And some people focused on things which was also I think better than others.

**Mary-Ann:** So you mentioned visuals. I just wanted to ask you, bearing in mind your answer to the previous question. What do you think makes a lecture video good or bad? You mentioned the presenter but you also mentioned...

**Dean:** Good visual images. You know when you've got little pictures. I thrive on visual image. So for me a good picture that stimulates my thinking just set something with slightly different context. All of that is I think helpful.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, and you mentioned images. I'm not sure if you recall but there were some points in the video where there were what we call cutaways, so videos within the videos. Particularly in the examples where they were shot on location and not in the studio, so the heart transplant

museum, the pathology museum and the children's hospital. How do you think those visuals, those moving visuals added to the course?

**Dean:** Ya, I don't have any strong feelings. Ok, they reminded me of the path museum and so on but you know, I don't think they added a great deal. I prefer a more specific image and an artwork or a something that stimulates your thinking. Just being in the path museum with a hell of a lot of specimens doesn't... listening to Steve talking in his study is fine. That's to me, more interesting to look what's in the background. What books is he reading, you know, all that sort of stuff what artwork does he put o his wall? I think that's far more interesting

**Mary-Ann:** That's actually interesting to note. You noted the things in the background in Steve's office.

**Dean:** Yes, they tell me who he is.... Blank background tells you nothing. That's just ... but it's something that brings the person in so you know, that helps me to relate to them.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, so would it mean more if each of the presenters were filmed in their own offices or in their own spaces where they work every day?

**Dean:** Depends, I mean, they might have a boring office. If they had a place – maybe in their home or something personal would... but then again, you know other things like the mortuary was great. Seeing the reality of what goes on is helpful for that bit. So it varies – but sometimes it got a bit contrived and perhaps because some of the presenters irritated me intensely and I didn't...you know... ya....so being in the path museum or being in some place like that didn't work if I didn't relate to the person.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, and you think that's important, that being able to relate to the person?

**Dean:** Ya, I'm not going to... you know, if somebody talks nonsense and I don't like what they're saying then...I can relate with someone who I totally disagree with but if I can connect in some way on some aspect to who they are, that helps me to engage a bit. So I don't mind a different point of view, but it must be in a way that I can interact. I mean you take Mark Solms for instance. He's great. He's focused, he's to the point, he's provocative and he's unapologetic about it. And that's great. And you know, I disagree with his premise and so on, I mean it was fascinating. I even went to look at a couple of videos on YouTube of his and it gave me great perspective of his thinking on all the topics he dealt with. You know the things around play and around whether we are just a bunch of reflexes and what have you and instincts and so on. Those were good.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, and out of interest, which were the ones that you felt you couldn't relate to?

**Dean:** Oh, that at the end. The sociologist or...

**Mary-Ann:** Oh, Deborah Posel

**Dean:** Ya, totally disagree, totally, totally, totally. She was talking nonsense. Worse than nonsense, she was making generalisations which are totally untrue. She might have got some interviews from some students but it irritated me intensely. I just didn't relate to her at all. And some of the things she said about how we were trained and so on. I trained at UCT and we weren't trained like that and I doubt that.. ok I trained 40 years ago but I doubt that things she said actually happened. You know and some of the

things that she said about the relationship between the doctor and the patient, it's nonsense man. I've been a clinician for 40 years. I don't work like that. When I interact with colleagues, yes there are useless doctors and there are doctors who have no bedside manner or patient interaction – but hang, that was a shocker. I was totally irritated by her. Take her off the course.

**Mary-Ann:** And out of interest, did you stop watching?

**Dean:** No. I watched everything through, I watched the whole thing through but I didn't agree entirely with her, what she was saying

**Mary-Ann:** No for sure. Ok, so Dean, as you know, we're a university and although we'd like to distribute free knowledge to everyone, everywhere, it obviously needs to be sustainable from a resource point of view. Both in terms of financial and people resources. So bearing this in mind, do you think there are any frills that could be dropped from the video production? So you mentioned earlier it would have been just as nice to see Steve in his office.

**Dean:** Yes, I would go put them in a setting that they're comfortable with, and that reflects something about them so that could cut down your costs and another thing – like the one chap on genetics does painting, I would like to see a little more of his paintings. Or the PL... things like that that might interest would be great.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, so things that kind of give you more of a sense of who the person is.

**Dean:** Yes

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, no that makes a lot of sense. And you mentioned that you haven't done any other courses of this nature. But can you take me though how you navigated the FutureLearn platform, what you would do when you logged on. So would you watch the video first? Did you do the course in the pathway that was prescribed? Did you do all the readings, did you link out when something interested you? Can you maybe just take me through some of that?

**Dean:** Ok, it started as we were packing up in Pretoria and moving. So I didn't get into the course until the first week was finished. And so I missed the first week and I had to go back to it afterwards. But generally what I would do is I would go though the thing systematically from the beginning and go through everything. and do everything and read everything and then explore things that are interesting to me. And I try to contribute. I wasn't a major contributor. But I had a say when I thought there was something worthwhile saying. And I read the articles so I did pretty much everything.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok. Got you. And then if you think about the Medicine and the Arts course as a whole course including the videos, the text beneath the videos, the quizzes, the assignments, and the readings and the opportunity for social interaction which you mentioned you weren't a major fan of. What role do you think the video played in bringing the course together?

**Dean:** You know, seeing Steve and Sue at regular intervals trying to bring the thing together and create a joining of the different aspects was good. And so I think that helped. I think the - some of the topics were interesting than others, I think that was excellent. Ya...

**Mary-Ann:** Maybe to help you, maybe I can ask the question in a different way. If you didn't have the video, do you think you would still have been motivated to go through the rest of the course?

**Dean:** Yes and no. For instance there was the one little section on (I can't remember exactly) I think it came in after the section in the beginning about children's voices. And there was a link to a radio thing. That was brilliant. That little kid, [Mujahid] Mujahid was fantastic. The fact that he could interview the professor it was such a change in a power relationship and so I thought that sort of thing was fine and that had just sound, it didn't have a video. So it depends on the topic I suppose. An animated presenter whether it's visual or auditory only... I'd rather have something that's interesting than something that's just visual because... just to make it visual.

**Mary-Ann:** So it's more about the content than it is about the medium, is that what you're saying.

**Dean:** Yes... but bad content is not going to be made up for by a great visual as such – it's got to connect. It's got to try and disturb my thinking so that I see something from a slightly different perspective.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure, I get what you're saying. Thank you Dean, I think that's about everything that I wanted to cover. Is there anything else that you wanted to feed back on?

**Dean:** I mentioned to Steve that obviously this was a huge amount of effort and work to put the thing together and one wonders... and knowing how difficult it is to sustain education and so on... and I sensed from some of the comments from the participants, particularly those that were more interested in the art side, that this thing was heavily focused on medical stuff which I

thought also could have been more interesting to get away from the medicine and look at the human side. Particularly the human side portrayed in visual images or in other things. I mean just catching up on life now that I've retired, I'm starting to read. And just reading some of the classics there are some fantastic insights into human nature and life 300 years ago and so on. I think those are very powerful. So I think one needs to really simplify the course if they want to offer this again and make it less a medical thing. Or, though – if you increase the patient's voice more – I mean there's a huge amount than one can learn from people's experience which I think could be brought in. And less sociologists and other -ologists and let's have real clinicians and real people and real things.

**Mary-Ann:** No it's interesting you say that because someone else that I interviewed yesterday also said exactly the same thing, is the other side of it. So I definitely will feed that back to the team. Thank you very much for that.

**Dean:** Good.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok Dean, thank you very, very much for your time and have a safe trip wherever you're going.

**Dean:** Pleasure. Good, I hope your research project comes together. It's a very stressful thing to do and you put a hang of a lot of effort in and one just hopes then that it comes out alright. But I've never been disappointed in things that I've done. You learn so much from it. You've just got to go through the pain, I'm afraid.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you very much, thanks for that. I appreciate it. Bye-bye

**Dean:** Bye-bye.

**Respondent 3 of 8 – Caren**

**Date: Tuesday 2 June**

---

**Caren:** Caren Hello

**Mary-Ann:** Hello Caren, this is Mary-Ann, how are you?

**Caren:** Yes, I'm well and yourself?

**Mary-Ann:** I'm very well thank you. Caren thank you very much for agreeing to talk to me this afternoon. How's the weather in Pretoria?

**Caren:** Pardon?

**Mary-Ann:** How's the weather in Pretoria?

**Caren:** Oh the weather? It's a sunny day. A bit windy. You're talking to a Capetonian so I'm very much a visitor in Pretoria. I don't take too much note of the weather. How's the weather there?

**Mary-Ann:** Oh, it's terribly cold. It's been so cold over the weekend. I think we've got some snow on the mountains. You know how that feels. It's that icy wind.

**Caren:** You should just get all the warm clothes together and warm up. That is important. Don't get the flu or anything. OK?

**Mary-Ann:** Definitely, winter has arrived.

**Caren:** I'm happy to assist in the interview so you'll take the lead and I'll just follow you.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure, yes. So thank you again for taking the time. Just before we start I want to give you a brief background about myself and my research and how this research fits into my work and my studies. So in my professional capacity, I'm a learning designer involved in the design and production of UCT's first free online courses. So the Medicine and the Arts course that you will have done and then there's also a few more courses coming up. But then in my private capacity, I'm also a student, and I'm doing my masters research on how different styles of video and different approaches can affect engagement in online courses. So I just wanted to let you know that I'm doing this research in my capacity as a student and not as one of the course designers. So that's the first thing.

**Caren:** Ok, I gathered that. I'm also busy with my Masters at the Business School in Stellenbosch.

**Mary-Ann:** Wonderful, yes you said

**Caren:** Obviously in a different capacity. So I assumed all the data you were gathering is for your research.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, great. And then also just to ask you if you don't mind if I record this session because I do need to produce a transcript for the appendices in my dissertation.

**Caren:** No that's fine, I know the drill. So it is fine, I don't have a problem with that. But English is not my mother tongue so you will really excuse my best effort of speaking English the Afrikaans way, OK?

**Mary-Ann:** Caren, if you had to hear how I speak Afrikaans, you would laugh. So please don't even think of it.

**Caren:** OK. But you will correct me if I can't find the right word?

**Mary-Ann:** Of course, I'll try to help you if you do struggle, I'll definitely help you.

**Caren:** The line isn't that clear so I'm just not sure how well you can hear me. I can hear you.

**Mary-Ann:** I can hear you perfectly. It was a bit funny when it was ringing, but it's perfect now.

**Caren:** OK. There's a bit of an echo. But it is not an issue. There's a bit of a delay where I'm hearing you and then it seems we're both talking at the same time where I did not anticipate you talking. So I don't want to talk when I'm not supposed to talk.

**Mary-Ann:** I would love you to talk this whole interview so don't worry about that. But if the echo does irritate you then let me know.

**Caren:** Is there anything that is like off-limits for the interview?

**Mary-Ann:** No, not at all. I've got a series of questions. So I'd like to guide the interview. But there is definitely space for any kind of feedback that you have. So definitely go ahead if there's anything you feel that you want to talk about in particular.

**Caren:** OK, so is it structured or semi structured?

**Mary-Ann:** It's kind of semi structured.

**Caren:** OK, I'll follow you – so you're welcome.

**Mary-Ann:** Thanks Caren. Ok, so just to start off. As you may know, the Medicine & the Arts course, it was UCT's first free online course so I just wanted to get a general sense from you, how you found the course.

**Caren:** Oh it was extremely appropriate for me at the time when I did the course because that was actually at the time when I also started with my data capturing for my own research. I work with visually impaired business leaders in a coaching capacity. Management, coaching and the perceived influence, value add of business and management coaching with visually impaired business leaders on their interpersonal communication competence. But besides that, I have a psychology practice, and I so much wanted to – always – I work according to the integral model in any case whether it's adding other disciplines to the human sciences or adding let's say an agricultural approach to and the then economic approach to humanities. And especially in comparison with the medical model and the social model.

And that's been a lifelong endeavour for me. But very much subjectively and qualitatively, never formally writing a thesis on that. So coming back to the

integral model. The reason why I so much enjoyed the course was because everything was integrated and the different the perspectives. It was at the right time, the right kind of course and I very much enjoyed doing it. That's why I sometimes I had to catch up a little bit due to other responsibilities but I got frustrated if I – not to catch up but because I wanted to stay with the group so to speak. I didn't want to do the stuff only at the end of the week, but sometimes it just happened that way. I'm not sure, did I answer your question?

**Mary-Ann:** No you did answer my question. It does actually make a difference if you stay with the group or if you lag behind because there's no one to have conversation with if you're behind. So I know many people did express frustration if they did lag behind, so thank you for that.

**Caren:** OK Sure.

**Mary-Ann:** And then also Caren, I wanted to find out from you – what did you think about the videos in the course in general? Both in terms of quality as well as the content of the videos specifically.

**Caren:** Well I think according to my feedback that I sent to you on a weekly basis as well, it was very good. I thought there was just one thing that I found distracting. And it was with the male presenter, I can't recall his name because I'm working with so many people. No critique towards him. But the way he was looking at the camera and looking at his text was extremely distracting for me because I'm in the mode when I concentrate on someone, I keep eye contact. And if his eyes are moving up and down all the time, it affects my concentration level. So I had to replay that quite often but initially it wasn't that obvious. But later in the course it became more distracting. I experienced it to some extent that the way his text was prompted him, so that position has changed. That was how I experienced it but that's a perception. I

can't verify the facts of that. So if he would've kept eye contact, maybe I would've listened 3 times in any case because I did download my course and I can go back to that but still that action, I found personally, it was distracting to me. But sometimes some of the videos the sound wasn't that great because I had to put my laptop on 100 and I would have preferred (and I don't have a hearing problem) I would have been preferred maybe the sound be more controllable that I can rather lower the volume than to put it at highest and I still can't hear.

So overall, it was lovely. I would have loved for the Khayelitsha, when they used that venue, Khayelitsha clinic, if for other people in the world - they have no idea where Khayelitsha is. They might know where Cape Town is. But if one can just sort of look from outside the galaxy and zoom in to South Africa, zoom in to the Western Cape province, zoom into Cape Town, zoom in to Khayelitsha and then zoom in to where the clinic is. It can really give a much better perspective to people that don't know South Africa.

**Mary-Ann:** So you're saying situate the location a little bit more, and contextualise it.

**Caren:** Ya, because I know where Khayelitsha is but someone else has no idea if it is in the middle of Joburg, you know although it says Cape Town of course. So it's somewhere in Cape Town. But nobody knows that it is actually in the middle of a squatter camp. And that it is not like in Adderly Street or at the Waterfront so where is that wonderful place actually situated despite the local environment and the community dwelling. It's something that went through my mind but I have a very creative mind so that's not even a suggestion, it's just something I'm mentioning maybe for future reference.

**Mary-Ann:** You're right, it would have contextualised it a lot more.

**Caren:** Exactly, because we had this global audience also taking part. But ok, I think I've answered your question on that.

**Mary-Ann:** Yes you have, thank you very much. And then you also partly answer my next question but I'm going to ask it anyway because there might be something that you'd like to add. You mentioned firstly that the sound and the looking away from the camera - that those two things were particularly distracting for you. I was going to ask you if you can remember videos from the course that stood out for you both in a negative and a positive light. So you've mentioned the negative things. Is there anything else you want to add to that? Like a particular video that stood out in a bad way before we come to the good ones.

**Caren:** No. I'm so focused on the content and the communication with the person delivering the course that the background is secondary. It's not my primary focus. And it's lovely to have different environments and different locations. All of it is positive. So I'm not jumping onto a negative bandwagon. That was because I really enjoyed it. The contextualisation because they did show the Red Cross Children's Hospital as well. Maybe the same could have applied to show Cape Town, just quickly. Not in a dwelling sense but just in layers where in Rondebosch eventually, where is it situated in Cape Town again.

But ok, there was that one particularly that I enjoyed. I think that was at Stellenbosch main campus. There was a lady in front of kind of a laboratory stuff. And please help me I'm a little bit out of the context.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure. No problem. So in the final week there were two people who were close to where the specimens were. So that was in the pathology learning centre and the one was an artist with black glasses and wore black, and that was Kathryn Smith.

**Caren:** That was her. I'm good with faces but the names always come afterwards. But it's exactly that. It looked like bookshelves kind of but laboratory shelves. But it was the artist lady that combined that with the content that she delivered. I really enjoyed that. I found her a very comfortable orator and I enjoyed that very much

**Mary-Ann:** What did you enjoy particularly about that video. Besides the content or was it purely the content.

**Caren:** Ok, besides the content. She was standing where she's working. That was my perception. That is where she's working and so obviously one can say yes but the other people were also standing... that doctor that sang that song, that lovely song at the Red Cross Hospital. They didn't show him singing. We listened to the song. I missed that... I wish I could have seen him performing the song. The song I forwarded that song to a number of people. Because I'm a founder member of Stellenbosch hospice so I'm very much involved in the oncological environment. That was also lovely. But coming back to that one, I think the colour scheme of the background. If I recall correctly, there was something blue in it. It's gentle on me watching and having to focus on the content but also the communication that's happening between me and the person delivering the content.

**Mary-Ann:** How did you feel about that because you mentioned now the communication between you and the person delivering the content. Did you feel like that was important? The way they spoke to you.

**Caren:** Yes, it made me feel like she was talking to me. Not that I need attention in that way, but it was not like I'm one of the million out there. It was very focused. I don't want to use the word intimate because that's wrong. I will just explain it by saying it was direct communication that I experienced on an

intellectual level as well as on an emotional level. And that helped me to focus in a relaxed way so I could absorb what she said and I could retain the content much easier, to then no distractions.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, no that's understandable. So you mentioned a couple of things. You mentioned so far if I can recall, the things that bothered you were the sound, and the things that you really liked was the way that the presenter communicated with you, and also the background to an extent. You liked that colour scheme and the direct communication. Are there any other things that you particularly liked about any of the videos? So any other factors to do with the presenter's style, to do with the video location (you said that's not so important to you so we'll leave that out) but also to do with the composition of the video – the background – is there anything else other than the look. Because you mentioned the look of the video in terms of the colour scheme. Is there anything else that grabbed your attention or not?

**Caren:** I'm really quite focused on detail. I'm a detail person. So I firstly absorb the whole picture that I see. And then I need to focus more on what is being relayed because that is what I need to retain. And it's no use to me to remember the background and can't recall what was said. So I have to force myself onto the message so to speak. But my self-awareness, the communication, the interpersonal communication that's happening which is virtually, but it's still almost as if it is for real. It really affects my self-awareness in the sense of how am I thinking about what I hear. And how am I feeling about my emotions that I'm experiencing whilst listening to the presenter. So it is on different levels that I also try to experience the interaction.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure. And I don't want to harp on about this issue of interaction but it is a really interesting one. So I wanted to ask - you mentioned Kathryn Smith on the top end of the scale that you really enjoyed her presentation of

the way she communicated and the ease with which she communicated. Can you give me the top ones that stood out for you in the communication sense and then the ones that didn't work for you. You did mention – I think you were speaking about Steve Reid? Are you speaking about the main lead educator when you said that he looked away from the camera and that was distracting?

**Caren:** Yes, it was just his. I focused on his eyes. And his eyes were going up and down because he was reading the text and then focusing, looking into the camera but his head is kind of still. But his eyes are moving up and down. So the moment we are not in eye contact, it's almost like a child that is suffering from ADHD and sitting in class and then someone's pencil falls and that moment he focuses on the pencil and he doesn't hear what the teacher is saying. So I had to work quite hard to avoid that because the moment we suffer from a lack of eye contact it's hard work for me to concentrate.

But the main lady – what's her name again? [Susan Levine] I also very much enjoyed the way she knew exactly what she was talking about and the content and the context. All of that. It was not just Kathryn's stuff. Susan also captured my attention.

**Mary-Ann:** OK. That's good to know.

**Caren:** I liked her clothes very much.

**Mary-Ann:** I'll be sure to tell her.

You can tell her. She didn't do the suit and tie exercise which was just lovely. Sometimes her hair was loose. I liked the variety. Sometimes her hair was

up. Sometimes it was just loose. Sometimes it was in a ponytail. I liked that variety. It shows a lot about the personality as well.

**Mary-Ann:** OK. So just moving on to the next question. As you know, we are a university. And although we'd like to distribute knowledge free to everyone, everywhere, it obviously needs to be sustainable from a resource point of view. Both financially and then also from a people resource point of view. So bearing this in mind, you already mentioned that you are someone who focuses very much on the content and the way it's being relayed. So I wanted to find out from you if you thought that there are any frills that can be stripped from the videos – with it still having an equal amount of impact. In other words, you already mentioned that the location was not very important. But for example when Kathryn Smith was presenting and you saw her in her natural workplace, that you appreciated. So I guess to put the question a different way, if it were just a presenter or the lecturer in their office taking the video on their laptops webcam – how would that make a difference for you in terms of the video.

**Caren:** Oh, that would be super boring. Because it becomes surreal. Because anybody can go sit there and that does not reflect the context of their work. So to me it is very important. I enjoyed it so much better if they were in the place of their work. When I referred to the zooming in to location and the venue, I was standing like say I'm in Lapland or somewhere else that has never been to South Africa and then it's just so much more interesting if you know exactly where is this place located. Nothing was overdone, and I would not say it was underdone either. With that Dr. Hendricks I would have enjoyed seeing him singing that song. In action. But it would have been added value.

**Mary-Ann:** OK. And what about the studio shoots – because there were a few weeks where there was that blue background. Did that make a difference for you?

**Caren:** Blue is definitely a user-friendly colour – not all shades of blue. The moment green comes into the picture and it becomes turquoise, then it's distracting to me personally. But I can only speak for myself. But whether it's a light blue or a dark blue – and actually the darker the blue, like an indigo blue – that background works against most people somehow. It's a lovely colour for a background.

**Mary-Ann:** And you mentioned that the location was important to you. Now in those videos there wasn't any context but we did try as far as possible to insert images where they were relevant. Did that come through or how did you receive that?

**Caren:** Maybe you just need to rephrase this one – or repeat

**Mary-Ann:** OK, so you know in the videos with the blue background? I'm trying to figure out which mode you preferred because there were basically 3 different types of locations that we shot at. There was the location shoot like with Kathryn Smith where it was in a place of work – so the Pathology Learning Centre, Heart Transplant Museum and the Red Cross Children's Hospital. Then there were other videos where we shot the presenters in their office. So Susan and Steve in their office space. And then there were other videos where they were in the studio, and when they were in the studio, we had that blue background. So you mentioned that the context was important to you. But you also mentioned that the blue background was fine. So I was just wondering between those two – at the location and with the blue background – which did you prefer and what are the reasons for your preference?

**Caren:** I'm recalling – I think it was a lady, a social worker. I'm trying to answer your question. She was describing also working with the children. But she was working in another capacity. Was she a social worker?

**Mary-Ann:** Oh, you're thinking of the children's radio producer – Nina Callaghan.

**Caren:** Yes – now that comes to mind. She was not in the studio, she was at the premises. So I'm coming back to the context. I guess in real life, there's not blue all over the place. So if you package it and it's in a ward or talking to a patient and he's on his bed, that would be more effective for me whether it's a blue blanket or not or a white wall or a blue wall or a green wall. Imagine the Groote Schuur, Chris Barnard Memorial thing. Imagine turning that all into blue. That would be a joke because firstly that's not how it was. And then that would be artificial as well. That would be totally unnatural – that is green all over the place because the doctors wear green and the tiles are green and it's quite an overwhelming green in those pictures and green is not a colour that I naturally enjoy, but in that context, it's perfect. Because it's supposed to be that. So the colour and the context there is complementary.

**Mary-Ann:** So you're saying that when there was just a plain blue background – would you have preferred those to be shot in context, on location or with the plain blue background in studio, - was that ok for you?

**Caren:** I would have preferred context.

**Mary-Ann:** OK – next I wanted to ask about your behaviour or how you went about learning in the FutureLearn course. So first of all, was this the first online course you did or have you done very many more?

**Caren:** No that was the first one and now I'm now busy with my third one,

I'm doing the one on blindness because that suits perfectly my own research and also, the one on mindfulness. I'm doing that one as well but I'm a bit delayed on that one. I need to do a lot of catching up on that one because the blindness one is quite important to me right one. But the one we're talking about in your interview was my first experience of a whole course like that.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, and then if I can ask you, related to all of the courses that you do, how do you go about learning in the courses. So just to remind you, there was the video, there were readings, there was text beneath the video that you could read, there were discussions. There were additional readings. How did you engage with all of that material?

**Caren:** Oh, I did not want to miss a word of the learning material, the text. The reading material. Immediately when I go into the week, I generated a file for that week, for that course. And then I download on my computer what I need to read because sometimes when I'm doing assessments and I have like half an hour that I can do some reading, I might not be online. So that's the reason that I have it captured in a file so that I can access it when I have time for the reading. So the additional reading was all wonderful. I tried to get them all but I didn't cover all of them yet. So I intend to cover all of the extra readings as well.

So the text, the content was more important to me than necessarily delving into my fellow students' perspectives on things. I had the experience that I made a comment on something and someone made a comment on my comment but she had no idea what I actually mean. But she meant it well so It's not judgment or anything. But the another person also commented on my comment which was in line with what my remark was about and at first I

thought now – why are we missing each other, we're not on the same page here. So I later realized that maybe I was talking within a specific discipline and maybe she was just not aware of that. So exactly the same, I don't know everything so maybe she was just looking for an answer or something. I didn't delve on that, I didn't have time for that. It was less important for me to go into all the comments of the people and not underestimating the potency of it at all, but time-wise, initially they said it would be 3 hours a week. That was not working for me. I needed at least 10 hours.

**Mary-Ann:** Wow, ok – so you really got into the content. Did the readings and engaged and thought about it.

**Caren:** And I had to go, I tried to go through the unit stuff more than once as well in order to form my own opinion because I need to, when I speak from my voice, it must be verified, it must be valid and it must be reliable. If I relay some content to someone that I don't see as trustworthy or valid, then I better be quiet. I must rather first verify it. Here and there were things that I wanted to research a little bit more before I would share it with a colleague or someone else. Which is research, which is experimenting with the content as well. Although they are the experts and very much specialists in their fields, I assume they also don't know everything

**Mary-Ann:** Yes, you're right in assuming that because they don't.

**Caren:** We're all in a learning curve, you know? But I do respect their knowledge, certainly they are amazing. The wealth of knowledge and experience they have in their fields. It's mostly those little things that people say almost as an afterthought. And I focus on that. And I'm not sure how much weight does it deserve. Is it very important to me? If it lands here on my chest, I know I must just make sure if I comprehended it correctly.

**Mary-Ann:** That's a good strategy. So you mention that you sometimes went through the content twice. Did that include watching the video more than once as well?

**Caren:** Yes.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, that's interesting. So what role do you think the videos played in the broader course? What did the video drive you to do?

**Caren:** It is the interactive communication. It is the interpersonal communication mode that I go into with that person. Imagine there was not that face, and it was just a voice. Imagine I'm blind so I can only hear the voice. I go through those layers also for my own research to actually determine the value of what I have to process and in what way am I absorbing it. So if I close my eyes, imagine and I just have to take in auditory, it is so much harder because personally I'm a visually dominant person, not an auditory dominant person. So the visual impact is vital. It changed the whole experience for me. If it was just a book, I'm so sick and tired of just books. But it made it alive, and it made it user-friendly and the engagement and the connection that I had with the person talking. I knew it's virtually, but I assumed I was almost standing or sitting in a class and I can watch the person. So I go into that space as if it's for real.

**Mary-Ann:** That is the kind of effect that we're trying to create so it's good that it does come across.

**Caren:** Well you certainly did a very smart job.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you. Caren, I think that's all that I wanted to ask you. Is there anything else that you particularly wanted to mention? Anything else

that you think I left out that's really hanging on the tip of your tongue that you wanted to say?

**Caren:** I'm just thinking. I'm just stepping back in my mind about the course because I've made many notes and printouts and all of that. I was intrigued by those mosaic pictures. It's beautiful and I made it my mission to one day go and visit and see it and touch it for myself.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh wow, so you actually went and visited?

**Caren:** No I still need to do that when next I'm in Cape Town. When I go down, I just go to my supervisor and I don't really have time for visiting but by the end of the year, I will have a civilized life as well like you. But I intend to do that so that I can see those pictures one on one, not just virtually. I would have loved to know the meanings of all of those pictures. Because if you see like the uterus displayed and there's a baby inside. But I'm just wondering about what am I not seeing because I always want to see what's the story behind the picture. That is just me, I need to step in that because what you see only represents a certain amount of what the artist displays but there is much more behind the artwork. I'm interested in what's behind the artwork as well. But that is just a personal wish that I will do for myself next year when I'm in Cape Town I'd like to go do that. And yes, I never knew about the thing at Groote Schuur Hospital because I had a heart operation myself so I was very interested in that and my operation was in 1967 where the technology was obviously not the same as it is now because I had to be in hospital for almost a month and people with that operation nowadays are a quarter of the time...

**Mary-Ann:** So was it when you were very young?

**Caren:** Yes, at that stage I was 9 years old. I was at the time very much sensitized to what life is about. But the situation was more or less desperate for everybody except me. But the way it played out made an impact on my life which I live with every moment in the sense that...Because they held like a funeral service before I was taken to the theatre because they did not expect me to survive the thing. So I was just looking into the theatre lights and I made a pact with some deity and I said well if I then wake up from this, I will just not ask for anybody's permission to be alive and live according to my own ethics.

Now I have the words, then I just had the awareness and the promise to myself. With one condition - never to hurt another person willfully, or harm another person. So I've had a lovely reckless life. To some extent reckless in the sense of not being stupid, but to go for things that other people were to ... just sort of venture and see what is there, where's the edge. Because there is no edge, we just make our own edges and put up our own ceilings and then because some dogma or some situation or some institution or whatever so I'm not a rebel against protocol at all, I'm just saying..

**Mary-Ann:** Just pushing the limits and boundaries and seeing what else..

**Caren:** Ya, because nobody else is standing in my shoes and I'm not responsible for someone else either. But something happened there, and I very much associated then with Chris Barnard and that whole thing in the hospital and I thought oh that would be a lovely visit. Having lived in Stellenbosch for 30 years and I never knew about that. I was so grateful to get to know about that.

**Mary-Ann:** I must tell you that we visited just to go look at the place before we filmed. But then I was so captivated by the place that I said to my boyfriend on a Sat, no we have to go and visit this Heart Transplant Museum.

And it's a wonderful tour, it really is. And it's definitely worth doing. I would recommend it 100%.

**Caren:** And if I didn't do the course, I wouldn't have known about it so that was one of the gems that came out of the course. Also to walk through that. One can more easily identify with it if you were also lying there more or less in the kind of same capacity. Although I didn't have a heart transplant, but they had to build up some of my valves. So one can just get into the ambience of that so to speak and it becomes real although looking at it on a picture, somehow it is surreal. But if you stand there, then it is for real. You know it's just dead people there I mean the wax people and it's not really an operation going on but our imagination is limitless. I can just imagine they are working there. They better not start breathing then I'll start running. So I can keep you busy for three hours and I won't do that to you. But I very much want to congratulate you on the quality of the hard work that you've done. And the joy it brought.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you Caren, I will definitely relay your message to the team.

**Caren:** Yes do so. Really I want to congratulate the people and there are so few things that make us proud of South Africa nowadays and like that course, that's why I also sort of thought if I'm in Russia now and I'm a student looking at this and I do these wonderful things from Cape Town, it will make me come and see it. But then I need to know where am I going. If you hear Khayelitsha you hear murder and blood. You don't necessarily hear lovely stories coming out of Gugulethu and places like that. And we know the reason behind that. We know that but other people don't know that, you know?. But you've done a splendid job and I so much enjoyed it and of course I've recommended that course to so many people. I don't know if they are doing it but I have a very large network. I've ordered my certificate, it's arrived in London with friends. Already like three weeks ago, so I'll have my certificate when those people

come back to South Africa in three works time. Then they will bring my certificate as well. Because I wanted to make sure it doesn't get lost.

**Mary-Ann:** Please send me a picture of it when you do get it.

**Caren:** Yes! Shall I do that?

**Mary-Ann:** I would love you to.

**Caren:** I'm in my sixth week with the blind course as well so I'm going to order my certificate once I've completed it. Because I think that I'm 87% completed work. But it's just not my ethics to rush through stuff. I'm not in the fake mode so I need to process all the details first before I can allow myself to say I deserve that certificate. And that's not conservative, that is actually being honest and accountable towards what you're doing. So I first need to finish that and maybe I can still get the blind certificate as well so that they can bring it for me and it doesn't have to go through the mail. Because things get lost in the mail. The South African Post Office. The post office isn't that user-friendly. I'm not sure how they still exist but anyhow, lets not go there because I'm too stupid to talk politics. Or the state of the SAPO. Lets not go there. Anything else from your side?

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you very much Caren. No that's all, you've covered everything that I wanted to ask you and thank you so much for your time, I really appreciate it.

**Caren:** No, you're so welcome. Can I just ask if my mind works like that. When I go shower then I have my epiphanies. So according to your questions, if something jumps out that I impromptu did not recall? Can I email you with something and add to what we discussed?

**Mary-Ann:** Please do, I would love that. Thank you Caren, thank you for suggesting that.

**Caren:** I won't send you a book. It might just be a little paragraph

**Mary-Ann:** No, perfect. Thank you so much.

**Caren:** You're so welcome. Keep up the good work and good luck for your studies.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you, and same to you.

**Caren:** Thank you, take care, bye-bye.

**Mary-Ann:** Bye-bye

**Respondent 4 of 8 – Kayla**

**Date: Tuesday 2 June**

---

**Mary-Ann:** Let's just make sure. Ok, seems to be recording. Thank you again Kayla. I suppose I just wanted to start by asking what your general impression of the course was. I just wanted to hear how you found it in general.

**Kayla:** I really enjoyed it. It kind of covered almost exactly what I want to do and that's why I took I guess. I want to go into art therapy. So definitely combine the whole art with healing right? [inaudible]

**Mary-Ann:** So you're fresh out of school, are you?

**Kayla:** Not quite. I am doing my specialised honours in English and professional writing at York and then I'm doing a counseling certificate at the same time.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh wow, that's impressive.

**Kayla:** Yeah I just do summers in the one and full year in the other. It's all about time management.

**Mary-Ann:** It's good that you're managing that. Ok, just to maybe be a little bit more specific then. What did you think about the videos in the course – in general?

**Kayla:** I really liked them. Just because I'm like in Canada I guess, there's nothing like any of the places that the videos were filmed in and that kind of thing here. I especially liked the last module on death that was beautiful. [Inaudible]. Being able to see that because over here, I don't think that would fly. It was really interesting to just see another way of looking at life and death. The videos came out perfect I had no problem watching them or hearing anything so they were really good quality. None of them were too long or too short they all had just the right length. Yeah, I really enjoyed it.

**Mary-Ann:** Great. And are there any videos that stood out for you in particular - both in a negative and a positive way? So in other words, can you remember what your absolute best and absolute worst videos were?

**Kayla:** I don't know if I had specific ones. I liked watching the ones that had the guest speakers because they offered different perspectives and they were in a different place. Like it was in the museum or it was in the first heart surgery room and all that kind of stuff gave me different perspectives I guess. And in that sense I guess then the ones where they were just sitting in the office talking were not so fun but still interesting obviously and they had to do those introductory videos so I still watched them but I thought the other people's perspectives were more engaging.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, that's good feedback. And is there anything that irritated you about any of the videos, or that you didn't like that much?

**Kayla:** [Inaudible] I could listen or I could watch. You know, I could just do my thing.

**Mary-Ann:** And what did you tend to do? You mentioned now that you could listen or you could watch them. Which factors did you use to decide whether you would listen to the videos or whether you would actually watch them?

**Kayla:** [inaudible] It was the same as the ones I thought were engaging. Like if they're just sitting there in an office or just kind of like a blank screen I would probably be more inclined to listen because they're not really doing anything or showing me anything to make me look I guess. But yeah, if other people were talking or if they were in an interesting place I might be inclined to watch.

**Mary-Ann:** I see. And so when you said the blank screen did you mean the blue screen behind the speaker?

**Kayla:** Yeah.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok great. So bearing in mind your answers to the previous question, what do you think makes a good lecture video? And you already mentioned the context, so where the video is situated. Also, one of the first things you said was that you really enjoyed how some of the videos brought you into the space of where the speaker was. But what else do you think made the good videos good, if you can think of anything else besides the physical location?

**Kayla:** I guess the speakers, does that count?

**Mary-Ann:** Ya, it definitely counts.

**Kayla:** All of the speakers, especially the teachers. All the different men, all the different women it was really engaging and some of the things I had never heard of before, the death photographer - I'd never heard of that profession so I found that really engaging because it was learning about a different [inaudible]. I found them really engaging even though they were not doing anything exciting. They spoke at a good pace, not too fast or too slow. Yeah, I thought all of the speakers were really good.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, and you mentioned that the speakers were really good. Is there anything in particular about them, besides the content of what they were talking about that made you want to listen to them and watch them?

**Kayla:** Just the way they [inaudible]. They all seemed to really love what they were talking about. That made them more interesting and more engaging because they spoke about the stuff with passion. I don't know, they seemed really invested in it and they seemed like they wanted the people watching or listening to [inaudible] or learn [inaudible] I don't know if that makes any sense?

**Mary-Ann:** Yes it makes a lot of sense; I hear what you're saying. Ok, then the next question I wanted to ask you was about the frills and the fanciness. So as you know, we're a university, and although we'd like to distribute free knowledge and content to everyone, everywhere of a super high, Hollywood production quality, it needs to be sustainable for us from a resource point of view – so both from a financial point of view and from a people resource point of view. So I was wondering if there was anything from the videos that you thought were – not over the top – but anything that you could have done without in terms of the production quality?

**Kayla:** I think even if the quality and the sound of the video was very pristine and perfect, if there had been a less good quality, it didn't really matter how clear everything is.

**Mary-Ann:** So for example – what I'm trying to get at – you mentioned the context, which was really good. But if the presenters were for example on their laptop and just using their webcam and it was like you were watching them and it was almost like a Skype conversation. Do you think that would have taken away from it at all? If they just recorded the videos on their laptop webcam vs. being shot... Like Susan and Steve for example, they did do videos in their office. Do you think that makes a difference whether it's professionally done or whether it's just done on the laptop or whether it's done in a particular location which you've already mentioned does make a difference to you.

**Kayla:** I don't think so. I've taken other online courses like at York and stuff where they just use their webcam and they just speak or they record PowerPoint slides where just the PowerPoint plays with voiceover and I found those equally as engaging. Because I like the pictures and found them interesting – you could have even voiced over pictures or anything like that and it would still be engaging.

**Mary-Ann:** So you mentioned the PowerPoint, and since you have experience of a course with just voice over PowerPoint. Do you think that there's a difference between voice over PowerPoint and voice over pictures and then kind of what we had so the presenter speaking and then pictures being inserted where they are relevant. Does that make a difference to you at all?

**Kayla:** I guess I'd be less inclined to watch just the PowerPoint. There's obviously copy on the screen that I have to watch. In some cases I would

prefer that if the content's boring then I'd just put it in the background. But whether it's just [inaudible] I don't think it really matters.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, and then you mentioned also that you've done other online courses. So can you take me through how you prefer to learn in an online course? So for example, there are various components. There are videos, there's text beneath the videos, there are additional readings, sometimes audio clips and interaction with other learners. How do you navigate through that space of the course in general and with the Medicine & the Arts course in particular?

**Kayla:** I try and do everything or at least a little bit of everything just so I can get the general jest. I tend to watch the video and read everything underneath it – obviously they're putting it there so that you read it. I generally only participate in the discussions when I'm asked to. Just because there are so many people. I'm not going to spend an hour reading all the comments. And I find that a lot of the time I don't really have anything to say [inaudible] because everyone else has said great video. I don't feel like I need to write that. When we were asked to participate, I participated but if we weren't, I didn't say anything extra. I generally did all of the readings because I really felt that they were interesting and engaging in that sense. I really liked the one – I can't remember what it was called – but a bunch of the copies were from there.

**Mary-Ann:** Where Does it Hurt?

**Kayla:** Yes. I really liked that. I read all of those ones for sure. Anything that was too long though, I didn't really spend too much time on. Just because I skimmed everything – I'm a fast reader so [inaudible]. And then in terms of the assignments – I put those in quotations I guess. [inaudible] They were interesting because it got us to do something different and take what we

were learning and apply it. Because I'm already a student I know how to do these it's not very different from other courses so it was pretty natural. But I'm not really sure how other people in different situations would have taken it but I liked it. I think reading other people's gives you a chance to – or at least encourages you to read other people's [inaudible] But I found that a lot of the time [inaudible] helpful because [inaudible] but this one everybody who was participating in it was being really kind and good at being constructive as opposed to critical. So I found that kind of nice. I liked at the end of each week it gave you 'What's Next' so it encouraged you to check out next week. Make sure you came back and stuff. So I don't know, I really liked that. I did the course in order. I know most people probably didn't but I went in order. I'm used to doing things how you're supposed to do it.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure, no that is how it is designed but obviously the option is there for you to explore and do as you wish, but most people – just out of interest, about 80% of people do the course in order. So most people stick to the rules.

**Kayla:** Because it was a life to death cycle, it felt more natural.

**Mary-Ann:** Yeah. Ok, that's interesting. And then, Kayla, you also mentioned when you did the weekly questionnaire for me, you mentioned that – I noticed quite often you mentioned that you had a face-to-face conversation with people about the content of the course. Is that because you are in contact with people who are also interested in the Medical Humanities?

**Kayla:** Sort of – most of the time it wasn't people who I was talking to that were particularly inclined [inaudible]. I talk to my family a lot because I stay at home. My mom's a nurse and a speech language pathologist so she's really into healing kind of thing so she was really interested and she's really supportive of what I want to do so I'd talk about it with her [inaudible]. For

her, she was asking questions and stuff. I think she would have liked to take the course. She just didn't have time. I also talked about it with people in my counseling class and recommended that they go and do it [inaudible]. I talked to some of my friends about it who are not in anything related to [inaudible] just to share the idea that you don't just have to be in one practice or area, right. It's really good, I was engaged by it, I think a lot of people are interested in how it comes together. [Inaudible].

**Mary-Ann:** That's great, that's wonderful. And then also just related to the previous question about how you navigated through the course. You said that you'd do it step by step, as it was built. What role do you think the video played in bringing to life the other aspects of the course – the other things you mentioned that you did – the readings, the assignments etc. What role do you think the video played in that?

**Kayla:** [inaudible] It just gives it something different because if you read 20 pages, you kind of get lost after 20 pages of reading [inaudible].

**Mary-Ann:** So you're saying it was more the change or variation in mode – so reading then watching videos then doing an assignment – the different types of activities?

**Kayla:** Yeah – it kept it kind of interesting and not just the same every single time. I could look through the to do [inaudible] and see – oh this one's a video, this one's a discussion. Even if you just look at them you can see how varying they are. How it's not just – one of my other courses on Future learn, it's just discussions and writing and I'm just like, alright, here we go, I have to kind of push myself whereas the video – every week started with a video and ended with a video. It brought me in and let me go. I found it more encouraging. It kind of made me feel involved. I'm talking at you – you watch the video and I guess it's not as much work. You know, reading and reading

and reading you feel like you're doing something, it takes energy whereas watching the video kind of gives you a little bit of a breather. You can get the information without any effort.

**Mary-Ann:** I get what you're saying. You're receiving the information and it's passive but it's still effective in the same way.

**Kayla:** Yeah.

**Mary-Ann:** Uhm, let's see. The last question I want to ask you is also a little bit related. So you mentioned the role that video played but you mentioned a lot that you spoke to other people. Say for example the video was not there at all and you just read the text and there was perhaps a transcript. Do you feel like you would still engage on the same level? So talking to other people – would you still feel motivated to read the text that you read – do you think you would have done that still?

**Kayla:** I don't know, I think because I'm interested in the course I'd still like probably try. But I think the video gave more – like the personal way the professors talked about it. [Inaudible] It kind of inspired me [Inaudible] even just hearing them talk about it, you can hear how it plays a big role in their life [inaudible].

**Mary-Ann:** So the passion spills over.

**Kayla:** Yeah [inaudible] But I talked more about the video content than I did readings. Most of the readings were a little more – when it comes to reading for me [inaudible] I'm kind of like – ok, well that's nice, I want to read I myself. I know other people aren't exactly like that. I know people who I can give points to but I feel more like you can give other people the jest of a video.

Writing is made so that you read it [inaudible] but I felt more like I could talk about the video and that kind of stuff.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, well thank you Kayla. I think that's all I wanted to ask you. Is there anything that you think that I missed or anything that you wanted to mention about the course in general, about videos, about anything specific? Don't feel obliged, but if there is anything else that you wanted to mention?

**Kayla:** Well I just kind of thought going back to your other question about the quality and whether it could be the webcam. In a couple of my other courses I just have audio files so there's no video in it. And I found it equally as interesting and engaging that kind of stuff. So even without a visual to go with it, I would still listen to the full audio clip. So yeah, I think that would be equally as effective.

**Mary-Ann:** Wonderful. Thank you Kayla, thank you so much for your time, I really do appreciate you taking the time to chat to me.

**Kayla:** No problem at all.

**Mary-Ann:** You're off on a trip tomorrow you say?

**Kayla:** Yes I am.

**Mary-Ann:** Where are you going?

**Kayla:** I'm going to California

**Mary-Ann:** Oh lovely – wonderful.

**Kayla:** Yes – I actually looked for tickets to go to Cape Town to see all the settings and stuff?

**Mary-Ann:** Oh really?

**Kayla:** But I don't think I could stay on a plane for that long

**Mary-Ann:** Well you should make a plan to come and visit some time but not during winter because it's horrible. Come during the summer – it's really nice.

**Kayla:** Does it get really cold?

**Mary-Ann:** It doesn't get your cold – but you see it's deceiving. It was really cold yesterday and the temperature was 13 degrees Celsius. I don't know what that is in Fahrenheit but it's 13 degrees Celsius and for us that's really cold. It's not that cold but we've got the wind chill factor because there's snow on the mountains so there's this freezing wind and we're not really equipped for the winter so although it's quite cold and it sometimes snows – not in the town, but it will snow on the mountains. So the buildings don't have central heating or anything like that so that's more what makes it cold than the actual temperature. But the summer's great. The summer's very nice.

**Kayla:** It's like 15 Celsius here.

**Mary-Ann:** And it's summer? That's crazy

**Kayla:** It gets warmer – it does get warmer but it doesn't get above 25 usually.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh wow, then that must be really hot?

**Kayla:** People put their air conditioning on. [Inaudible] I don't get too hot here, I think it's nice, but in winter it goes down to minus 35.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh my goodness, I can't even think about that. I can't even imagine.

**Kayla:** We get snow everywhere right.

**Mary-Ann:** I once lived in Korea and the coldest it got was, I think, minus 25 – and it was just too much, it was just so cold. But then again, because there's heating everywhere, it was ok, it was just when you're outside that it was a bit unbearable. Otherwise it was fine – but jeez, I cannot imagine minus 35.

**Kayla:** We have heating here too. But the worst is when you're waiting for a bus or a train and you're outside. It's freaking cold.

**Mary-Ann:** But anyway, enjoy your trip to California. I hope you get some nice warmer weather there. OK Kayla, thanks so much, I do appreciate your time.

**Kayla:** No problem at all.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, bye-bye now. Cheers

**Kayla:** Cheers.

**Respondent 5 of 8 – Jane**

**Date: Wednesday 3 June**

---

**Jane:** I'm fine

**Mary-Ann:** That's good. How's Japan?

**Jane:** It's great. I love it here.

**Mary-Ann:** How long have you been there?

**Jane:** For two years.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, and are you teaching English?

**Jane:** Yes.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh lovely. I also did a little bit of that in Korea a few years ago. It's a great experience.

**Jane:** Yeah.

**Mary-Ann:** So Jane, thank you very, very much for giving me some of your time. How did you enjoy the course?

**Jane:** I really enjoyed it. I come from an anthropology background so I was really interested to see the interdisciplinary approach. The videos were very interesting I thought. Though I still haven't given you my sixth week.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh that's no problem.

**Jane:** I was actually just working on it a second ago. I'm almost done.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh really? Are you still doing the course?

**Jane:** Yes, I've actually been doing three courses on there and I'm doing a TEFL course and I'm working full time so it's taking a long time to do everything. Yeah, just a week ago I think I finished the last week and I just haven't turned in the survey yet. But very interesting stuff. I really enjoyed the last week I think the most.

**Mary-Ann:** Great, that's good to know. OK, so just before we start, Jane, I just wanted to give you a brief background about myself and about the research. I, in my professional capacity, work as a learning designer at the University of Cape Town but I'm doing the research in my capacity as a student. So I just wanted to let you know that I'm doing the research as a student rather than a representative of the University. And then I also wanted to let you know that I would like to, with your permission record this call because I need to submit a transcript in my final appendices of my dissertation. So I just wanted to make sure that that was ok with you.

**Jane:** Oh, that's perfectly fine with me.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, and I didn't put my camera on because it's just a bit little bit tricky with bandwidth but I'll just kind of say hi and put it back off. Hi.

**Jane:** Hello.

**Mary-Ann:** I don't know if you find the same problem, I know in Korea it wasn't a problem at all, bandwidth was super fast.

**Jane:** It's nice here too but I went to South Africa over Christmas and it was pretty not great.

**Mary-Ann:** Yeah, we actually have quite good Internet because we're at the university it's just that it's intermittent so I'll just for the rest of the interview pop that off.

**Jane:** OK, that's fine.

**Mary-Ann:** OK. So you did talk a little bit about it, but I just wanted to get your general sense of the course and what it was like to participate in the Medicine & the Arts course compared to other courses that you're doing now.

**Jane:** OK, well it's very interesting. I really like the course. Some of the... there wasn't any set deadlines, which is actually a new thing for me. This is the first FutureLearn course I've ever taken. So it was like – What? There's no deadlines, I have nothing to judge how much time I need to spend on this. So I ended up spending a lot of time reading comments at first. Like I would try to read all the comments and that was like impossible. Because they were all so interesting, everybody's different perspectives. So I found that in the beginning of the course, it was taking up a lot more time than suggested. So I

had to whittle down the time that I was doing and obviously, since I'm not finished, it took a lot more time. But no, it's really well the way it was set up. It was really interesting to have the different perspectives from the different people. I would have liked more during the discussion time at the last video usually when the people were talking it would have been nicer if the person asking the questions was there with the people that they were talking to. Or if not, if they had presented the person who was going to be talking next like saying oh this person is going to be talking and this is the question. If we actually heard it, it would be nice. But other than that I think all the videos were great. And then also the extra reading materials were really good. Some of the assignments were a little challenging though. Because I had to really think outside the box. And I'm like oh, what the heck? So yeah....

**Mary-Ann:** You mentioned that you really like the videos. Can you say what about the videos you really like?

**Jane:** Well I really different from the particular videos but I mean I liked the different professors, the different disciplines definitely. Giving their perspective on art and medicine of course the purpose of this course but you never really think about doctors and stuff using art in their practice – wow, it's like oh my goodness. And then the forensic artist, like I said I really liked the last week. I was like: I never really thought of a forensic artist before – wow! I didn't really think about a lot of the things that these people were presenting as well as like the different settings that the videos were set in. I really enjoyed when they were set in a particular place that related to their video or they had props to show us because it helped it be more tangible for me. And I also, because I'm not from South Africa, the different accents and stuff were very interesting to me. So sometimes they were a little hard to follow but with the transcript it really helped me. I also watched most of the videos more than once but that's just because I'm a very slow person when it comes to like videos and reading so I have to take notes on everything. But yeah. I

really enjoyed them. They definitely brought a more human aspect than just reading something.

**Mary-Ann:** And you mentioned that accents were sometimes a problem. I just want to understand that. So was it South African accents or was it – I guess you would be able to tell having been to SA before. Or was it the foreign accents that were more difficult to understand.

**Jane:** Well it wasn't necessarily that they were more difficult. I think it was more the accent plus the vocabulary being used. Because I didn't understand the vocabulary that was being used and with the accent on top of it, it was a little challenging until I actually saw the word. But yeah. I am always around people with different accents in place I'm from there's a lot of foreigners. And coming to Japan and having people try to speak to me in English, I'm really used to it. So I mean when the guest speakers were speaking quickly with the accent it could be a little difficult sometimes especially if you were – I can't remember the specific person. But one of them tended to talk in like circles around the topic. So it was like OK, I got what you said. Oh what are you doing now? Oh, You're coming back around, OK I got it now. And I'm excited really now, so I'm talking really fast. So if you don't understand anything I say please tell me to slow down.

**Mary-Ann:** No it's fine. From American television, I'm really used to the accent. And I also stayed in New York for a little while. So it's not a problem at all. I'm used to American people asking me to speak slowly. I remember, I didn't quite get it at first, but people would say "I'm sorry what happened?"

**Jane:** Yeah - my boyfriend's from South Africa so I can understand. He actually went to UCT.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh wow, ok. Is he with you in Japan?

**Jane:** Yes, he lives in a city right next to where I live, so we're a little far from each other but yeah, we met here.

**Mary-Ann:** Wonderful. Ok. So you mentioned quite a few positives – actually, what I first wanted to ask you, was you mentioned in terms of the content. Is there anything in terms of the quality of the videos that you wanted to mention? How did you find the quality of the videos.

**Jane:** Quality in terms of content?

**Mary-Ann:** In terms of production quality – so technical quality rather than content quality.

**Jane:** Yeah – most of the videos I think the sound was very good. Like I said, I really liked the particular settings that related to what they talking about. The blue screen on some of them threw me off a bit. I didn't dislike it but it didn't really add anything for me. And the sound quality was really good on all the videos. Some of them if they were in a large room, you could tell by the sound. But it didn't impair what they were saying in any way. What else? I did notice that the lead educators would usually be sitting down while everybody else would be standing up. It doesn't add or subtract anything. It was just a strange quality I noticed. And I didn't dislike it or anything but yeah – it was just something I noticed. Usually the frames were a lot closer in on the lead educators than they were on the guest speakers so I don't know – yeah. I can't think of anything else right now.

**Mary-Ann:** That's fine. Can you think of any particular videos that really stood out for you both in a positive and a negative light – if there are any. So

you mentioned that you liked the week on death. But if you can put content aside for a little while. Well not really, you don't have to put content aside. Sorry, scrap that. Which of the videos really stood out for you?

**Jane:** Well the one in week 6 when they actually showed video instead of just pictures. I think it was 6.6.

**Mary-Ann:** It was Lorna Martin, the forensic pathologist.

**Jane:** Yes, they actually showed a video going to a crime scene and an autopsy and stuff like that. That was really intriguing just because I didn't expect to see an actual autopsy even though there was a warning sign and all, I thought there was just going to be pictures. So that really caught me. It wasn't a negative or anything because that kind of stuff fascinates me but I know that for some people it might be little abrasive. Usually the ending, the wrapping up videos left me with a lot more questions than answers but I think that was one of the points of the class was to try to envoke us to think about the interdisciplinarian way of things, to ask more questions so I think that did a good job of that though sometimes it was just like – whaaat? But - yeah – I'm trying to remember all the videos right now

**Mary-Ann:** It was a while ago hey?

**Jane:** Yeah – I have a lot of notes but I don't really wanna have to pull those out right now.

**Mary-Ann:** Wow.

**Jane:** Yeah, I took a lot of... this all of my classes so don't think it was just for this one, but yeah. I did like (I think this is probably going back to me liking the content as well as the videos) but the medical anthropologists' case study, I really liked the fact that she showed some of the children's work and she showed pictures of some of the children because it made it more tangible for me to see what they were talking about, what they went through. I also think that with the second week with the endocrinologist I think it was? Maybe not, he was a cancer doctor.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh yes, an oncologist – Marc Hendricks.

**Jane:** Right, right. He talked about his music and I think I would have liked to have heard the song he was talking about that he'd actually written. That would have been really nice.

**Mary-Ann:** The song is actually there.

**Jane:** Is that the song that's playing in the background?

**Mary-Ann:** It is playing in the background but it's also a link to one of the steps. So I can go and check for you where exactly it is and I'll send you a link to it. So I'll send it to you after this.

**Jane:** Yeah, I just must have overlooked it. But yeah, it was really good. I really would have liked to have heard that before because it was a really interesting concept for me that the doctor wrote his own music and helped use it in his therapy with his patients. So yeah, it's really cool. I can't really think of anything else.

**Mary-Ann:** No that's fine, that's perfectly fine, I think you've given me a lot there. Ok, so bearing in mind what you mentioned now and this question about all the things that you liked about specific videos, what do you think it is that makes a good video? So what do you think the elements are that make a good video?

**Jane:** Well it's nice when it seems like the speaker is talking to me and not just to dead air so I think that's part of the person's presentation as well as the video positioning. Like when they're standing up and you can see their hand gestures it's actually nice because when you're in front of an audience, you use your hands to help you demonstrate. I like a lot of visuals that actually connect with what the person's saying at the time they're saying it. It might be because there's a lot of people that are from different countries and some of them might not be proficient in English on this type of site. Maybe having the speakers speak a little bit more slowly would be also helpful. They all had really good lighting I think so they weren't in shadow or anything and the sound quality was really good so I really liked that.

**Mary-Ann:** Great, thank you. I'm making some notes because although I'm recording this, yesterday one of the interviews that I'm recorded just actually didn't record. So that's why I'm a bit slow.

**Jane:** I'm totally ok with that, I do the same thing.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, so now I have a questions bout kind of reducing the frills. So as you know, we're a university and although it would be really nice to distribute free knowledge to everyone everywhere in the world, it needs to be sustainable for us. So it needs to be sustainable from a resource point of view – both people resources and financial resources. So I'm just wondering from you, without reducing the impact of the video, what frills do you think

could be taken away without taking too much away that it reduces the impact of the video.

**Jane:** I don't know.

**Mary-Ann:** So if I give you an example, you mentioned things when you were talking about when you were talking about what makes a good video. You mentioned things like the sound quality, the good lighting, the visuals that connect with what the speaker is saying. And that's all production quality type of thing. So if for example we had the same video, the same presenter but it was recorded using the person's webcam on their laptop. Do you think it would have had less of an impact, and how do you think it would have had an impact?

**Jane:** I do think if they used the microphone on a laptop and it was fuzzy, it might have had less of an impact because like I said, if it was done at the speed it's done naturally, it would have been a lot harder for non English first language speakers and also the sound. I get headaches rather easily based on sound, so if it was a really long video like the couple of 10 to 14 minute videos just hearing the background might bother me a bit. So I wouldn't watch it more than once like I did. With lighting, that one's subjective really. I think it depends on the person. You can have a horrible lighting kind of like mine right now and still get the message across. With the visuals, I think a message can still be got across without a whole lot of visuals but there still needs to be some like I said hand gestures definitely. Maybe if the presenter had props so that if they had something that they could focus you to – like the one who had the heart monitor. I really enjoyed that as well. I forgot to say it earlier.

**Mary-Ann:** Even though it was with the blue background?

**Jane:** Right, right. But he showed the actual prop and that helped me to visualize what he was talking about because if I've never thought about what a foetal monitor looked like, then I wouldn't know. And he showed me that it cranks up – I was like wow, that's so crazy. But yeah, I , mean if they had props or used hand gestures, I think a point could get across definitely without extra visuals.

**Mary-Ann:** But you would say that the sound id the most important thing?

**Jane:** Yes, I really do think sound is the most important thing. Because tone of voice can also get across what the person is trying to say and if it's distorted then I really can't figure out what's going on.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, thank you for that Jane. The next thing I wanted to ask was about the way you navigate through these online courses. You mentioned that you're doing quite a few. And Medicine & the Arts I'm presuming wasn't your first one. So you've done quite a few online courses and I'm interested to know how you navigate through the courses. What path do you take? Do you have a strategy doe engaging with all the material? So think about the videos as well as the text below the videos, the assignments, the readings. You mentioned your note taking strategy earlier but if you could just elaborate for me on that a little bit, that would be nice.

**Jane:** OK, well, I'm a very linear person so I usually go in order. I start off with the text at the bottom before I go to the video to see what the video's going to be about. And I'll take notes as I do that and then I watch the video. Because I was doing the surveys, I did video quality first and I took notes of just the video quality without the content. And then I watched it again with the transcript once I discovered the transcripts and started taking notes with those which helped me go through it maybe just once instead of going over it another 2 times. And then I would go to the comments section and read. First

I was reading like I said before like half of the first week I was just reading all the comments – I'm like – I'm never gonna get through all these comments. So I limited myself to – I was ok, I have to comment once and respond to two people and that gradually dwindled down to me only reading and then maybe commenting or maybe responding because it got just really overwhelming, but yeah, that's pretty much my process. With the assignments, most of them I haven't completely finished / haven't turned them in yet. But I've written them. I'm very picky about the stuff I turn in. So I have to talk about it with somebody before I turn it in. Get them to check it over and see if it makes any sense because sometimes I just write gibberish and it makes sense to me at the time. So I plan on, after turning in your survey to go back and finish all of the things and turn them in. So I've technically done the 50% so I've done that but I'd like to finish it completely because that's the kind of person I am. But yeah – If I have a set deadline, it's a lot easier for me to do something, like finish it by that time but because it's so laid back you can just do it whenever. But yeah... I don't know if I have any other things to tell you. I really liked the quizzes. I prefer doing quizzes and stuff where I can get some kind of feedback. And I like the discussion videos. I really like those but I kind of wish they would ask all of the questions to all of the individuals. Maybe not all of the questions because some of them were rather specific. But some of them could have been asked to all the guest educators.

**Mary-Ann:** So you're saying have a common question that everyone answers.

**Jane:** Yeah – and I really liked the discussion videos where the actual person asking the question was with them. Because it made it more real as a discussion. So that was what I was expecting when I went – oh it's a discussion and they'll be talking about it together. And it wasn't and I was like oh.

**Mary-Ann:** That was our intention; it was just a bit logistically difficult to do that. But I do get how that would have added a lot more value.

**Jane:** Well If you were talking about the part before about what would add or subtract value , I think the lead educators actually being there would also add a lot.

**Mary-Ann:** Yeah – sure. Ok. The next question is related to the previous question. You mentioned your strategy for working through the course. What do you think the role of the video was in helping you to navigate through the course in the way that you did. So what did the video get you to do? Or do you think that the video wasn't really that important in getting you through the rest of the material.

**Jane:** I think it was actually the one thing that was really important in getting me through the rest of the stuff because like I said, it kind of made it more... I'm a visual auditory learner so I work best when I have the actual material in front of me and then I can talk about it with someone else. So it gave me, in my own mind, someone to talk to over the material. Though I wasn't really involved in the discussion on the video, I could take what they were saying and put it in the comments later. So if there wasn't a video at all, I would have not really survived going through all of the readings and stuff without any other input, I don't think.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, that's good feedback. And then just the last question – I suppose you've already answered that. The last question was if you didn't do the video, would you still have gone through the rest of the course. But you've kind of answered that in saying that the video is really important.

**Jane:** Well I would have because I'm a little anal about finishing things that I start. But I probably wouldn't be half way down by now. Even though it's way over

**Mary-Ann:** Yeah - So it kind of motivated you to go through at the pace that you wanted to go through it so you would have done it but been slower in doing it.

**Jane:** Right, exactly.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, thank you Jane, those are all the questions that I have. Is there anything else that you can think of that you'd like to add?

**Jane:** Well, I really, like I said, I really really enjoyed this course. Some of the parts I didn't really see how they connected but I'm planning on thinking about it more. Well I kind of – this is not part of this – I'm actually applying to UCT next year so I want to get my Masters degree in Education there.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh wonderful, that's great, what are do you think you'll specialize in?

**Jane:** I'm really not sure yet. I have so many interests and UCT is like completely different from the college I went to. Like what's an honours degree? What? Like maybe you have to get an honours first before you can get Masters – I'm like ok, what's an honours?

**Mary-Ann:** You know what you must do? It's very strange. I'm also doing my masters now and Initially I wasn't accepted. My application was rejected at UCT. And I did my undergrad at UCT as well. So my undergrad was a 4 year

degree. But It's an honours degree, it's similar to what you would do in the states. So it's an honours degree, it's at honours level, but it doesn't say that. It 's just kind of a bachelors degree. And my application was rejected because I didn't have honours. So you just have to motivate and explain to them. And if you don't actually talk to a person who is a person, they might reject you. But so you do have to speak to someone and explain to them what your situation is because it should be equivalent to and honours degree, what you have if you've done a degree in the states.

**Jane:** Well I did that in anthropology so I was like oh, I'll just do an anthropology degree and then focus on education and then I talked to someone who works there in the open education project...

**Mary-Ann:** Oh really, who did you talk to?

**Jane:** Thomas King

**Mary-Ann:** Oh really, Thomas works in the same department as I do

**Jane:** Yeah he's my boyfriend's friend.

**Mary-Ann:** Oh wow, it is such a small world, isn't it?

**Jane:** So yeah, I was talking to him and he said yeah – you should probably just do an education degree. So I was like yeah cool, I would love to do an education degree. So I'm getting all my information to send in now. I want to start in 2017 so I've got to do the application completely by next year. But I'd like to talk to people. Because just trying to get in contact with people, even in the international department is really hard. I emailed someone and then

they didn't talk to me back for like 2 months. And I was just like I really wanna talk to someone.

**Mary-Ann:** Well, if there's any way I can help, just let me know. Because I mean I know how difficult it can be to get in contact with someone and I can figure out who the person is that you need to chat to. So just let me know if you need some help.

**Jane:** Oh thank you, that's very nice of you. So you said you were a learning designer - is that with the same project as Thomas?

**Mary-Ann:** It's not with the same project as Thomas, but it's the same department as Thomas. So we are the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching so Thomas works in the same department, he's on the same floor as I am but on a different project. Our project is a specific project. It's the courses that we run on FutureLearn and on those platforms. It's all the Massive Open Online Courses. So his project is a different project, but it's run in the same dept.

**Jane:** It really is a small world. Well he's the one who introduced me to this course. So I was like yeah – so I was just like, oh yeah, I'd like to participate and be like – yeah, I participated in something. So you should let me come to your school.

**Mary-Ann:** You know, I think – at least I think – it's a lot easier, it's a lot less competitive. I'm not sure how it is for international students. But it's a lot less competitive than it is in the states. Like entrance to universities. Because undergrad, you don't have to submit an essay or anything like that. It's purely academic.,

**Jane:** I would have gotten in such a good college in South Africa. I was valedictorian of my class – I was number 2 in my class. So yeah.. man. I should have gone to South Africa first.

**Mary-Ann:** Well hopefully you'll still come.

**Jane:** Even if I don't come for school, I will be coming. Because I wanna be with John. So yeah.

**Mary-Ann:** Great! It's nice to meet you Jane and thank you so much for taking the time to help me do my research.

**Jane:** Of course. Well if you need anything else from me, don't hesitate to call me back.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you, I really, really do appreciate it.

**Jane:** Of course

**Mary-Ann:** Ok Jane, have a lovely evening

**Jane:** You too – bye.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, bye-bye.

## **Respondent 6 of 8 – Enid**

**Date: Wednesday 3 June**

---

**Mary-Ann:** Right, ok. So just also to give you some background about my research and myself. In my professional capacity I'm a learning designer so that's why I was involved in the design and production of the Medicine and the Arts course that you participated in. But in my private capacity, I'm a student and I'm doing my Masters research on how different styles of video and different approaches in video can affect learning and engagement in online courses. So I just wanted to let you know that I'm doing this research as a student and not as a representative of the course. So that's all that I wanted to say on that side.

**Enid:** Ok.

**Mary-Ann:** Enid, I just wanted to start by getting a feeling from you how you found the course in general, just to get a sense of how you experienced it.

**Enid:** Well, in general. In general I enjoyed it very much for a lot of different reasons. As far as how I experienced it, I'm actually taking a vacation from online courses right now because I have too much garden work to do actually, it's been interfering. I - and I kind of have the same approach to all of them. I generally read all the reading material, I generally look at all the videos if they have them, quizzes I generally do the quizzes to see how well my brain is retaining things that day. I generally do not participate in the online discussion things and it's personal with me, it's nothing to do with the whole concept of doing that, it's just personal with me. I a) don't have the time for it b) I don't really get anything out of it particularly. I dip into them once in a while and just to see what people are going on about. And sometimes there's some humour in there. But I don't generally do anything with those. I also, for lack of time, if there are written assignments, I typically

don't do them in any of the courses. I'm not working on buffing up my resume.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure, sure. Of course not. Ok, and then if I can ask you if you can think particularly about the videos in general now but speaking about the videos in particular, what did you think about the videos both in terms of their quality and content?

**Enid:** I noticed in all your little questionnaires that went along every week that the videos are what you were focusing on. I think I would rate them as OK. The quality of them were certainly fine. The content was sometimes very interesting, other times not. And that's no reflection on the presenters. It's just the way that it struck me.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, sure, and do you want to elaborate on that? What did you find interesting?

**Enid:** Oh you know, it's been so long now since I done that, that I can't remember all of them.

**Mary-Ann:** No that's ok. So I guess it might make it difficult to answer the next question, but maybe if you can think of any of the videos that stood out for you. Do you remember any of the videos in particular?

**Enid:** Probably the one I remember the best was towards the beginning of the course. All that stuff about the museum and the heart transplant programme and the people who had participated in that or had transplants themselves.

**Mary-Ann:** So the one you remember the best was the one with the man who had the heart transplant?

**Enid:** There was that one and there was another one that kind of toured through the museum there and showed the way that things were displayed.

**Mary-Ann:** And do you think, just for clarity on my side, do you think that the fact that you remember that is because it stood out for you in a positive light or do you just randomly remember that video?

**Enid:** I think that probably remember it better than some of the others because my professional background when I was still working was in healthcare and I'm old enough that I remember all the hooaaa about Dr. Barnard and the first heart transplant. So it's kind of fascinating to see all that material preserved in that museum setting there.

**Mary-Ann:** So you remember the video because you could relate to the content in some way? Is that what you're saying?

**Enid:** Right, that's a good way of putting it. So the one who had the gentleman in it who has had a heart transplant and now he's – I've forgotten what his profession is - but I remember he talked at some length about a sports programme that he got involved in that was just for heart transplant patients. That was really fascinating.

**Mary-Ann:** He actually works in justice and reconciliation but he's involved in these transplant games he was talking about. And is there any video that kind of stood out for you in a negative light that you remember something in particular that you really didn't like?

**Enid:** No, not at all. Not at all. The general tone of a lot of the videos and indeed the course material was kind of the way folks there were delivering healthcare to your population which I found just really interesting. That's not something we see in the US. In the US it's kind of a here it is, take it or leave it approach which of course doesn't work very well on some of our population so it was really heartening to see someone taking a different tack there and apparently having good results with it .

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, I think I want to rephrase my next question slightly. So bearing in mind your answer to the question about which videos stood out for you. So you spoke about Stanley Henkeman, the heart transplant recipient, as one that really stood out for you. You can also think more generally on this one. Thinking about other courses that you've done. What do you think makes a good video in this particular setting, so in an online course? What do you think makes a good video?

**Enid:** Well, of course having an interesting speaker and an interesting topic is the at the head of the list. As far as the setting of the video, I'm a little bit indifferent to that, it doesn't matter if the background is somebody's office or they're out in the park or where they are actually sitting. To me that doesn't make a lot of difference. On some online courses I have taken, the video is somebody sitting there reading from a transcript – very boring. Very boring. Because I can read the transcript too. And if I'm in a bit of a hurry, I can generally read the transcript faster than the person speaking. And I do that. Some of the courses I've taken I just read the transcripts if the speaker on the video is not that captivating.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, so you do skip some of the videos?

**Enid:** On some of the courses. I don't recall that I did that on yours. If I did that, it sure wasn't very often.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, so that also relates to my next question. You mentioned that for you there's not a real difference in the setting, it doesn't really make a difference in the setting. So my next question was really about the fact that we're a university and although we would like to distribute free knowledge to everyone, everywhere, it obviously needs to be sustainable from a resource point of view. Both financially and people resources. So bearing this in mind, how do you think from the perspective of fanciness and frills, what do you think could be removed from the video to still have an equal impact? So for example, I'll tell you the kinds of things that cost money. So the kind of really stripped-down version of it would be just an audio file, there would be no video. And then at the next level, there would be the presenter perhaps doing the presentation of their laptop webcam so they're recording the presentation themselves and the audio's not that good, the lighting's not that good, it's just them in their office with the webcam. And then the next level up is perhaps what we had or the presenter speaking without anything being inserted into the video, so it's just straight them speaking and then the next level up is including images and video footage to illustrate what the presenter is speaking about at that time. So that's kind of the continuum of production quality.

**Enid:** Right, I see where you're going with the question. Is the thrust of it what's the least you can do and still have it engaging?

**Mary-Ann:** For you, yes.

**Enid:** Well, let's see. I'd knock off that bottom one where all it is an audio tape, I would not bother with those, I would read the transcript. So that's not even... the person who's sitting in front of their laptop with somebody holding

a webcam on them reading from the transcript is usually fairly deadly too, for me, I would just skip that and read the transcript. I think it's engaging to have some kind of something happening there but you certainly don't need a cast of thousands. You don't need a marching band or any of those kinds of things that tend to be costly and difficult to arrange and coordinate. I don't think any of that's necessary. Sometimes it's good to have when somebody's talking about something, this is what I'm talking about and here's a picture of it for some kinds of things I think that's very helpful. Does that make sense at all?

**Mary-Ann:** Ya, that does answer my question, thank you. Ok, so you've actually answered my next question because the next question was about navigating through the platform so how you tend to learn in online courses but you already mentioned right in the beginning you mentioned that you read all the material, you look at all the videos, you do the quizzes, you don't participate in the discussion forums, and you don't generally do written assignments. But as for the sequence of things, how do you go about doing it? Do you like to start at the beginning, or do you like to whizz through and come back, or what is your path through the course generally speaking?

**Enid:** Generally I start at the beginning and go on until I get to the end and then I stop.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, you'd be interested to know that... it sounds like an obvious question but a lot of people have very interesting strategies and that's why I ask.

**Enid:** Oh I'm sure – yeah, like how much do I care about this, let's see what lesson number six is about? But I tend to start at the beginning and work through it till I get to the end. Once in a while if something really fascinates me, I might go back and look at it a second time. Most of the online –

possibly all of them - although I'm not sure about the one from a Scottish University - Once the course is over then it kind of disappears from their catalogue if you will so if you don't go back and look at it while it's kind of going on it might be gone a month from now or a week from now.

**Mary-Ann:** Well these courses do stay on forever or as long as the platform is around so if you are interested in going back, there's a tab called 'my courses' and I think there's 'current courses' and if you chooses the 'current courses', at least on the FutureLearn platform, you will have access. Just in case.

**Enid:** Yeah - most of the ones I've taken have been Coursera. And then I found FutureLearn and I've been doing things on there the past few months.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, it's just interesting to know which platform you prefer, if you do have a preference?

**Enid:** I like the idea that you can go back to things on FutureLearn and I didn't always find that to be the case on Coursera. Other than that I can't say that I really have a preference. I chose things because there was some interest.

**Mary-Ann:** Sure, because of the content.

**Enid:** Yeah, I have taken some video course that after a couple of weeks or a couple of the presentations, I dropped them. Either because they were so hideously boring I couldn't stand it and the transcript wasn't helping. That was generally it.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, now I want to talk about the role that the video played for you. You mentioned that audio wouldn't really be enough for you and that the video did add an element of something that made you interested. What about the video motivated you to partake in the rest of the course. So what I guess what I'm asking is – did the video play a role in getting you to do the other activities in the course? And how so, if so?

**Enid:** The other activities being? Reading material?

**Mary-Ann:** The reading material, the quizzes, the assignments, but you said that you don't really engage with assignments and the discussion forums. So the other activities that you did.

**Enid:** The video added to the experience for me because I think if I just had to read transcripts for things I would have to be pretty fascinated by the material before I say oh yeah, I'll sit and read this thing.... So they played a role for me but I guess I don't really require elaborate ones. I'll give you an example of one that I took one time, what they did in a video, they were talking about, the person was talking about what things cost in ancient Egypt and there were things like corn and the chicken a piece of land - those things that you live on. So they had a little thing you could look at to illustrate the point. It was one thing to just read through that kind of material. But they had this wonderful little chart with little pictures – here's a horse, here's a water buffalo, a bushel of corn and what it cost and kind of related to modern pricing. Only really, really vague - there because that's hard to do. So that sort of a thing stuck into a video was very good I thought. And all that was, was a chart that you looked at so probably not terribly expensive to produce.

**Mary-Ann:** So you're saying it's really about the appropriateness of the material and how well it links to what the presenter is talking about?

**Enid:** Right, right.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, I guess that also partly answers my next question which was the last question which was if you didn't watch the videos, would you still have done all the things that you did. But you already answered that. So I think that's everything I wanted to ask Enid, that you very, very much for giving me some of your time.

**Enid:** You're very, very welcome.

**Mary-Ann:** Is there anything else that you wanted to mention in particular, anything that I missed out on that you remember, any feedback you have about the course in general?

**Enid:** I can't.... I'm sorry to do this but somebody was ringing my doorbell can I see who it is? He's ringing my doorbell because he has to use the loo, I just know it. Hold on.

**Mary-Ann:** No problem.

[Waiting]

**Enid:** Oh I'm very sorry about that. I'm having construction work done here and one of the workers needed something.

**Mary-Ann:** Not a problem at all.

**Enid:** So to make your a) your course better or different, I don't know that I can really say anything specific. I enjoyed it.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, that's not a problem. Thank you so much Enid and I hope that you have a lovely rest of the day.

**Enid:** Well, I'm gonna work on that. It was very nice to talk with you. I hope your project goes well and that you graduate Suma Cum Laude when that day comes.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you. I hope so too.

**Enid:** Alright.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you very much.

**Enid:** Take care. Bye-bye.

**Mary-Ann:** Bye.

**Respondent 7 of 8 – Maria**

**Date: Wednesday 10 June**

---

**Maria:** I think there's distortion on the line

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, would you like me to call you back?

**Maria:** It might be worth it, can you hear me?

**Mary-Ann:** Yes, I can hear you perfectly, but let me try to call you back just to make it easier.

**Maria:** Yes, every now and then there's crackling on my line which there isn't at the moment. Maybe you should just carry on in case we get a worse line because sometimes we do get a bad line but I'll just interrupt you but I'm just also concerned about you recording that it will be adequate. But I'm sure it will be fine if you can hear you.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, I can hear you but if you can't hear me, just let me know and I'll repeat myself.

**Maria:** Yes, that's fine.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, brilliant. Thank you. Ok, so as you may know, the Medicine & the Arts course was UCT's first free online course and I just wanted to get a general sense from you how you found the course. Just in a general sense.

**Maria:** It was very interesting. Some of it was more interesting, obviously than others. And sometimes I was busier than others. And towards the end I got quite busy and so I actually only finished with it quite a few weeks later. So ya. It was fascinating. I really enjoyed it.

**Mary-Ann:** OK. And just out of interest, what is your background? Did you say you're still working a Groote Schuur?

**Maria:** No, I was working at a family day hospital in Ocean View close to where I live and I retired at the end of last year and now I am doing tutorials just two afternoons a week at Medical School in family medicine. So this was fascinating. You know, it was, ya.

**Mary-Ann:** And then to get a little bit more specific, what did you think about the videos in the course both in terms of quality and content. And I know you said that some were more interesting than others, but in general, how did you find the quality and the content of the videos themselves.

**Maria:** The quality I thought was excellent. I can't remember not being able to hear people. I thought they were clear, well presented and ya. The quality was good, the content, mostly was very interesting.

**Mary-Ann:** And were there any specific videos that stood out for you? Both in a negative and a positive way.

**Maria:** Ya, you know it was a while back so I can tell you what stood out for me now, in retrospect. The first week stood out for me. It really made an impact and the one particularly that I thought was wonderful in the first week was the literature person from UCT.

**Mary-Ann:** Peter Anderson.

**Maria:** Anderson. I just loved that. I've since been to the Heart Museum because he really just got me fascinated. I just loved him talking about the metaphor and the one who died and the one who gained life and I just found it very beautiful. The other one that stood out for me was one on children. It was the doctor, the paediatrician. His name - Mendelson was it?

**Mary-Ann:** Marc Hendricks.

**Maria:** Marc Hendricks . And then the radio. The children's radio. That was fascinating and hearing the children speak, that was just wonderful. I'm trying to think. You know those were the early ones and I probably gave them more time, more attention because I probably had more time then but those were fascinating.

**Mary-Ann:** Can you unpack that a little bit for me. You said you found Peter Anderson's video very interesting and Marc Hendricks and Nina Callaghan. Can you tell me what about the videos you found interesting?

**Maria:** I think being a doctor and having a literature person talk poetically about heart transplants, I just found it lovely. I just found it very beautiful. And the metaphor, the death and the resurrection of the patient who got the new heart, it's just lovely. I just found it inspiring and I was very inspired by the need for poetry in our lives, especially in the health sector. It kind of just bringing creativity into healing and I found that wonderful. And guess it sort of just for me I thought wow, this course is going to be amazing. And there were different aspects during the course which were very lovely but that was kind of almost a highlight, probably because of what I needed. I just kind of

had come from retiring a few months before of working really, really hard and needed a bit of inspiration in health. So it came just at the right time for me because that kind of poetic discussion of how amazing medicine – what it can do, the intervention in people's lives is lovely and then also the man who had a heart transplant talking about his life. That was lovely as well. But also Dr. Hendricks. The way he spoke about the children. There was one thing that he said that was just amazing about children, ill children. And I just can't quite remember it. They were things that were just very helpful in the difficulties for patients and families but you know, how healing can come to that. It was lovely. And the children talking about their illnesses and their articulating their own journey was lovely. Especially that interview with the little boy. What was his name?

**Mary-Ann:** Mujahid

**Maria:** Yes, that was wonderful. There were some of these things that just should be out there for people to see. Some of them were just too incredible. Some of them just stood out like that. That little girl [inaudible] the young woman who also spoke about...?

**Mary-Ann:** Hazel. Her name was hazel.

**Maria:** The one with MDR TB I think it was. Such a [inaudible] really just incredible and wonderful to hear about these things happening. And because it was Cape Town and I live in Cape Town, and I thought I was a little bit in touch with what goes on in the health field but I had no idea about the Children's Radio, I just think it's incredible.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, so you spoke a lot about the content of the videos. What makes a good video lecture in your view? And it doesn't have to be related to

this course. It can be any other video lecture that you've ever seen. But if you can just talk about that for a little bit?

**Maria:** What makes it good? Well what was interesting was that some of these people were able to talk for 8 minutes on a video and it would actually be engrossing. There didn't have to be things to look at. I mean it was just the way they [inaudible] interesting, no it was fascinating. Quite a few of them had visuals and I think they helped. But I think it's the personality. The person and their enthusiasm and passion probably more than anything. Ya, it's interesting because I think Marc Anderson.

**Mary-Ann:** Marc Hendricks – or Peter Anderson?

**Maria:** He spoke twice didn't he? There was a little discussion after [inaudible] and he had a few distracting facial expressions in the second one that didn't come out in the first one if I remember right. I don't remember the second one at all. I don't remember anything that he said in that. I do remember the facial ticks but I actually don't remember what he said what he said. Whereas the first one I was completely engrossed. So I don't know why. I would be interested if I went back to look at the second one to hear what he said, it might have been very interesting. But I actually can't remember, you know it didn't make a great impact. But the first one did.

**Mary-Ann:** And you didn't notice the ticks in the first one?

**Maria:** I didn't notice them, no. And maybe because it was also where he was. You know, it was in the museum, there was more to look at around him, but I'm not sure but there was nothing that distracted me at all in the first one. Ya, so I'm just trying to think of the last one on death with.

**Mary-Ann:** If I can just refresh your memory of the last week.

**Maria:** It wasn't the last woman. The pathologist.

**Mary-Ann:** The forensic pathologist.

**Maria:** Yes, she was just very interesting and she spoke so well. She was great and I think it was her enthusiasm and she just spoke in a way that was easy to understand unlike the young woman, the artist. Who was – I really didn't know too much about what she was talking about. I missed a lot of it because it was a little bit too...

**Mary-Ann:** It was vey academic.

**Maria:** Yes and I didn't really... I didn't get it.

**Mary-Ann:** Me neither, to be honest. Ok, and I think I interrupted you. I just want to go back for a second if you wanted to say anything because you mentioned some of the things that stood out for you in a positive light, but I think I interrupted you when you were going to say something about the negatives. Were you going to mention anything?

**Maria:** I can't remember but let me think... Ya, I suppose the only negative would be the one woman that I remember because I think it was most recently, was the one that was too academic for me. And I recently relooked at Mark Solms. And I found it much more interesting the second time because I could take it in better. And I'm not sure why that was, but it was very interesting when I watched the two videos again. And I think maybe he – I don't know why but maybe because I was doing it the second time,

probably I could take more of it in. And I said oh, no that was really interesting whereas the first time I wasn't really – I don't know why – maybe I was tired. But I thought when I watched it the second time, I thought that's very clear – or fairly clear – I can follow that, it's interesting and he speaks quite well. Whereas the first time I kind of, ya [inaudible] but the second time, that really helped me to understand something.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok so as you know, we are a university so things have to be, for us, although we'd like to distribute all this wonderful knowledge for free to everyone possible on the internet, it has to be sustainable from a financial point of view and also from a people resource point of view. So what I was wondering, if you can think about video production quality. If you can think about a continuum. So on the one end of the continuum, there's no picture, and it's just an audio file. And on the other end of the continuum, it's like a documentary or Hollywood production, so it's got people speaking, it's got video footage, it's got cutaways to other images when they're relevant and if you can think on the other side of the scale, stepping a metre forward if you could think about just audio but then the next step audio is the lecturer recording their lecture on their own laptop in their office on their laptop's webcam. So if you can think of that scale, what qualities from the videos do you think we could strip away but make them equally as effective. So in other words if you strip everything away you get audio, and if you strip nothing away we have the videos that we produced – if that makes any sense.

**Maria:** Yes. It is nice to see the person talking but it's also nice to see some pictures. I'm just thinking of somewhere along the lines we saw, and it might have been Prof Reid and Prof Levine talking outside Khayelitsha hospital, day hospital. And there were murals and things. And that was very nice to see that. And those kind of visuals are quite helpful I think. So I think for myself I would be satisfied with the picture of the person who's talking and without it being a whole video with some visuals. But alternative, I don't know what the quality is of a laptop camera. I don't know what quality that is. But

that quality would probably be fine. And I think better that [inaudible] to be able to have this for free. And I think it's much better to have it affordable if the cost is too high that doing that and then maybe adding pictures from the computer [inaudible] interesting visuals would be fine.

**Mary-Ann:** And what about... you mentioned earlier that you really liked Peter Anderson and you liked that you were situated in the HTM so there were different locations that we filmed in. Some where we filmed just in the studio where you would have seen that blue background. So for example Mark Solms had that blue background and both Raj's had that blue background. And then there was Susan and Steve being filmed in their office. And then there was also filming at location, so Red Cross Children's Hospital, the Heart Transplant Museum and the Pathology Learning Centre. And I'm interested because all the videos that you said stood out for you were filmed at those locations and I just wanted to probe to see if having that context had anything to do with it. Because you mentioned the heart transplant, you mentioned the children's hospital and you also mentioned the last week on death.

**Maria:** It probably did you know, it probably did. And Ya. I think it could have made of an impact than I was aware of. It's probably easier to listen to the lecture. I must say when Susan Levin and prof Reid were talking, it was, to be honest, it was boring. It was difficult to focus on what they were saying because I suppose they were speaking rather in general in an office and so it possibly it wasn't my [inaudible]. Which is interesting... You're probably right that I'm saying that [inaudible] but filming prof Anderson in that museum was WOW, this looks interesting now. Yes and the little child interviewing his doctor was amazing. That didn't matter where it was but obviously they were together and it was just a very interesting situation. Ya, but I don't know you know, maybe also for me if I wasn't watching Susan Levine and Prof Reid, watching them talk, and just listening to them [inaudible] I don't know. I'm not

sure at what level if the situation is boring it's not better to just listen without looking at them – I don't know that.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, that's interesting. The next thing I wanted to ask was whether this was your first online course or whether you've done any others before.

**Maria:** No this is my first completely. And I wasn't sure if it being online would overstretch my technology ability but fortunately there wasn't a lot demanded on me technologically, but it was great.

**Mary-Ann:** So you found it quite user friendly?

**Maria:** Yes. Yes.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, that's good. Ok, and then related to that question, what I was trying to get at was – If you can perhaps describe for me how you learn in online courses and how you navigate through the course. So the reading material, watching the videos, engaging in discussion. How did you navigate your way through the course?

**Maria:** I would watch the videos and I would do the readings, usually. I mean it would depend on time because it took a lot more time than I thought. Which was fine because rather have more input than less. And then so I would do that first and then I would do read what people said. And there was just so much discussion going on and I would eventually read the most liked comments. And I also didn't contribute much to the comments because I thought I really haven't got else to say but also it was so time consuming. And some people have so much time. When I think I've got lots of time. But it was great to read people's comments. It was fascinating. And also people gave information and further things to look up. It was wonderful. And I didn't

do any of the writing because I just didn't have time for that. That would have been worthwhile to do but I'm amazed how much people put into it.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, so you just kind of were saying you just took from the course what you had time to do and what you didn't do wasn't necessarily because you thought that it wasn't valuable, it was just a time constraint thing.

**Maria:** Yes. And also, I was very glad to be told that you could come back to it. So I mean to come back to looking up things its still available on the internet so I can still look it up and re-look at things and follow things up which is amazing resource to have.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, the next thing I wanted to ask was about the Medicine and the Arts course as a whole including the videos, the text beneath the videos, the quizzes and assignments, the readings and the opportunity for social interaction. And I'm wondering what role do you think the video played in bringing all those other elements together – if it plays a role at all.

**Maria:** I think to me the videos were a central role. You asking what role they played in the whole thing? The videos?

**Mary-Ann:** Yes

**Maria:** Yes, for me they were central because those were people who were giving us interesting information or perspectives and that to me was central. Ya, I can't imagine it without the videos.

**Mary-Ann:** So if you weren't able to watch the video, do you think that you would have done the other things in the course, so read the comments and do the readings?

**Maria:** Yes, I probably would have if it was presented... I'm just trying to think, if there was a written text of what Prof Anderson had to say... and then discussion about heart transplant... ya it's an interesting thing. I think I might have, I probably wouldn't have engaged to that extent. To actually watch all the videos because it was quite varied and there was then that thoracic surgeon who spoke and then there was somebody else and seeing them and hearing them talk about their perspectives there's a big difference between text so I think it really does help to engage in a course.

**Mary-Ann:** Sorry I'm also just making notes because my recording device failed me, so if I'm a bit slow it's probably because of that. Maria, I think that is all that I actually wanted to ask you. Is there anything else that perhaps you wanted to feed back on, that you have at the top of your mind – I mean no pressure – but just if there's anything else you can think of.

**Maria:** I'm just thinking about the little tests that we did. And I'm not quite sure why we did that. Sometimes it was useful to just check some information if I got something wrong – Oh, why didn't I get that, let me go and check it. But it kind of felt a little bit like school and I wasn't really sure why they did that.

**Mary-Ann:** Do you think that that had something to do with the kind of content or just the fact there was a quiz. So what I'm trying to ask, if it was another kind of course that the quiz would have been appropriate. Or do you just not like quizzes in general?

**Maria:** I don't know. I suppose I thought it was a bit unnecessary but I don't know... it felt like... I don't know. I didn't quite know why we were doing them. It felt out of keeping with the kind of course it was.

**Mary-Ann:** Ok, that's what I was trying to get at. If it was related to this specific course, so you felt like it wasn't appropriate for this specific course.

**Maria:** It didn't really feel necessary or appropriate.

**Mary-Ann:** OK, that's useful feedback, thank you. Ok, thank you so much Mary-Ann. I'm very glad that we finally got to speak to one another and thank you very much for your time, I really do appreciate it.

**Maria:** That's a pleasure and it's been nice to talk about the course because it also helps me to think about it, and realise how much I appreciated it.

**Mary-Ann:** I'm glad that you did.

**Maria:** It was certainly very good, and I think it's amazing that these things are out there on the internet – and ya, there's so much to learn. So what you're doing I'm sure is very valuable.

**Mary-Ann:** I hope so.

**Maria:** Yes, and good luck with it.

**Mary-Ann:** Thank you very much, I appreciate it – and have a lovely evening.

**Maria:** Thanks, all the best hey, take care.

**Mary-Ann:** You too, bye.

**Maria:** Bye.

**Respondent 8 of 8 – Marlene**

**Date: Monday 13 July**

---

Marlene: Hello

Mary-Ann: Hello, is that Marlene?

Marlene: It is, yeah.

Mary-Ann: Hi Marlene, it's Mary-Ann here, how are you?

Marlene: I am fine, how are you?

Mary-Ann: I'm very well thank you. Marlene, I must apologise profusely for the last two times. I think if I were you, I would just have given up on me and I'm really, really sorry about that

Marlene: Don't worry, I know these things happen. It's fine.

Mary-Ann: Ok, I'm really, really sorry. But thank you for agreeing to speak with me and for holding out because I would have given up already so thank you very much. Marlene, I'm going to get straight to it because I don't want to waste too much of your time, I think I've already done that so I'm going to hop straight into it if you don't mind.

Marlene: I'm fine.

Mary-Ann: Ok, so just firstly to give you a brief background about myself and about my research. In my professional capacity I'm a learning designer involved in the design and production of UCT's first free online course – so the Medicine & the Arts course that you would have participated in. And then in my private capacity, I'm a student and I'm conducting my Masters research on how different styles of videos and different approaches in video can affect engagement in online courses. So I just wanted to let you know that I'm doing this research in my private capacity as a student. And then Also, I wanted to ask your permission if I could record this call because my thesis requires that I submit a transcript of this conversation in the appendices of my dissertation. So I was just wondering if that's ok with you?

Marlene: That's fine, absolutely. Yeah.

Mary-Ann: Wonderful. Great. Ok. So then getting straight into it. Marlene, I'm not sure if you're aware, but this was UCT's first online course – the Medicine & the Arts course and I just wanted to get a general sense for how you found the course before we go into detail about the videos.

Marlene: Ok. I found it quite fascinating and quite interesting to be honest. It was something that I never actually thought to put together. You know, in my own mind I never sort of thought that Medicine & the Arts went together.

Mary-Ann: ok, and just out of interest, what is your background?

Marlene: Not really. When I was growing up, I always wanted to be a doctor. I was always interested in doing medical things. So I've got far more of a biological background than an arts background.

Mary-Ann: I see, I see. Ok. And in general, what did you think about the videos in the course – both in terms of quality and in terms of content?

Marlene: I thought they weren't bad. I think there were one or two where the sound quality wasn't too good. To be honest, I can't really remember because it was such a long time ago. And I'm doing quite a lot of FutureLearn courses so I sometimes get the bits mixed up. Whereas I think that they were not too bad but the sound quality wasn't as good as it could have been.

Mary-Ann: And I don't want to push you on this, but in terms of the content, I don't expect you to remember any of the specific content but in general, how did you find the content of the videos. Were you happy with that?

Marlene: yes, I was. Yes, I found it really, really interesting. I found it quite fascinating as well to be honest, so I really enjoyed them. I really enjoyed learning about something that I've got no idea about

Mary-Ann: And now to get a little bit more specific, I know that it was a really long time ago so I understand if you can't remember. But if you can kind of stretch your memory, can you think of any specific videos in the course that stood out for you? And when I say stand out, I mean both in negative and a positive light.

Marlene: I can't think of any negative ones. The positive ones I think would have been a young girl who had been ill or was still ill and she was telling about what she'd been on some sort of radio programme I think.

Mary-Ann: Yes, you're talking about – it wasn't a video actually – it may have been one of the audio clips that were linked to Nina Callaghan's talk.

Marlene: Ah, yes.

Mary-Ann: Ok, so you found that interesting?

Marlene: yes, I did yeah.

Mary-Ann: That stood out for you?

Marlene: Sorry?

Mary-Ann: What about that clip stood out for you? What was it that interested you in that particular – well it wasn't a video – in the audio clip?

Marlene: I think I just found it engaging the way she was talking . The way it made me think about things was just really engaging. And it's quite a brilliant thing to be doing to have that radio programme or whatever [inaudible]. People who are ill or children specifically [inaudible].

Mary-Ann: Sure – and were there any other videos that stood out for you, Marlene?

Marlene: That's the only one I can think of [inaudible].

Mary-Ann: No that's fine, that's not a problem. Ok, so now I think I want to zoom out a little bit and you said you're doing quite a lot of FutureLearn courses so I think that works in my favour now, because the question I want to ask you is about video lectures in general. What do you think makes a

good lecture video? What do you think the factors are that make you engage or really enjoy or really be interested in a video?

Marlene: I think obviously the person giving the lecture has to be engaging, has to not only know the subject but has to be really passionate about the subject. I don't think it does much good for any of us if they're just repeating facts. That doesn't do it for me I'm afraid. If somebody's really passionate about the subject then it comes through and it makes it far easier to listen or to grasp it. The other thing I would say, I don't like when somebody just stands in front of a camera as much as perhaps standing in the lecture hall and delivering the lecture.

Mary-Ann: Ok, so you prefer the ones in the lecture hall compared to someone standing in front of a camera. You mentioned the lecture hall now but does the setting make a difference for you? So on the Medicine & the Arts course for example, there were some cases where we filmed in different locations. So the week on Children's Voices, I'm not sure if you remember, but it was filmed in the Children's Hospital and then the week on the Heart we filmed at the heart transplant museum.

Marlene: At the museum or something, was it not, I found that quite good actually because it gave you a sort of sense of where it happened and apposition for it to be occurring.

Mary-Ann: Ok, and do you find that makes it more interesting for you when there's a context – rather than...

Marlene: Yes I do. That's the word I was looking for –context. Yes, it makes it more real as well in a way, to see the lace where these things happen. It's far more real.

Mary-Ann: Ok, good. Sorry, just one moment. Sorry Marlene, I just lost my questions here, I'm just getting them back quickly.

Marlene: Yeah – technology.

Mary-Ann: Ok, so can you think of – where I'm trying to go with this question is – what do you think are the main factors that absolutely need to be there in a lecture video versus what the nice-to-haves are? So ok, you mentioned now the context. You really don't like the studio – when the lectures are filmed in studio, when they're just standing in front of the camera – and you prefer if they are in their specific context. Can you think of any other factors that are need-to-haves in a video, and I'll tell you why I'm asking this question because the way I'm looking at the videos is kind of from a production value point of view. So for example, filming in context – you have to get a whole film crew to a specific context – that's a little bit more expensive. There are things that add to the production value so I'm kind of - what I'm trying to get from you is – can you sort of – because you said you're doing quite a few FutureLearn courses. Are you able to separate the need-to-haves and the nice-to-haves in terms of production quality? If that makes any sense...

Marlene: Probably, yeah. I mean need to have obviously, it needs to be clear so that we can hear what they're saying. Yeah, I think that's probably the biggest thing. The things I do have problems with are some of the subtitles, they're done with voice-recognition software and sometimes it's gobbledygook. Because the voice recognition doesn't recognise correctly which I mean is obviously a technical issue rather than an issue with the lecture or anything else. That is an issue across all of the courses to be honest, not just that one. So yes, someone who can talk – but some one who's really engaging as well [Inaudible]. You know, someone's who's

passionate about the subject [inaudible] enjoying [inaudible] passion on that knowledge. And it's quite nice sometimes to have diagrams or slides or whatever in the background with the bullet points and things like that so that you can actually read what they're saying and take it in as well as listening to them saying it. So I think those are the need-to-haves – probably slightly more professional video with better quality camerawork and better quality lighting sometimes as well. Sometimes the sound can be variable but they are technical issues, obviously to do with the film crew or camera crew or whatever.

Mary-Ann: Ok, so what I'm hearing you say is that the production quality is actually a nice-to-have. The need-to-have is actually an engaging lecturer or presenter and proper learning materials like the transcript or captions that are actually what the lecturer is saying and the diagrams and the slides that support what the lecturer is saying.

Marlene: Yes. And also I would say having a proper introduction and a proper summary at the end so they tell you first of all what you're going to do and at the end they tell you what they have done. Cause that [inaudible].

Mary-Ann: Sure – of course – yes. That makes a lot of sense. Ok, and you mentioned that you've done quite a few online courses. Can you talk me though how you like to learn in the courses? So the way you navigate through these online courses that you do on FutureLearn. So do you read all the materials? Do you watch all the videos? Do you watch all the transcripts? What is your approach...?

Marlene: What I tend to do – yeah for most of them I don't tend to watch all the videos, I must say I have [inaudible] problems with it [inaudible] technical issues. I do download the transcripts because sometimes I like to go back to them if there's something I've not quite understood. But I don't always look

at them, I must admit, but I've got them there [inaudible]. If it's something I'm really interested in, I will also look at any suggested reading and additional reading. If it's not, then I might just skip over it. The one thing that I do not like and I think it's just an age old thing from years and years ago – I don't like the ones where there's an assignment that you've got to submit.

Mary-Ann: Ok, then the social aspect, do you enjoy that aspect of the course? When I say the social aspect of the course I mean talking with other participants...

Marlene: Yes, I do, yeah. I mean sometimes I don't make comments because Sometimes the course material is so complex – well I find it so complex also such a high level that I don't feel comfortable enough to make comments [inaudible] I don't understand it. But other things I will have discussions about [inaudible] that I do know the answer to and I enjoy putting in bits like that. I find that quite useful as well – especially when you do it online – you're not face-to-face in a room with somebody. [inaudible] good yeah.

Mary-Ann: And then if you think – you can think about the medicine and the arts course but if you can't think of Medicine and the Arts you can think of any of the other courses that you've done or any of the other courses that you do collectively. Including the videos, the text beneath the videos, the quizzes, the assignments, the readings and the opportunity for social interaction- what role do you see video playing in bringing the course material together? And you already noted that the introduction and the summary needs to be in video format. But what do you think the role of video is in motivating you to engage with the other parts of the course? So to do the readings , to do all the other bits that you do in the course. To want to look at the transcripts, to want to engage in conversation. What role do you think video played?

Marlene: It's got to explain things sufficiently well that I understand it in the first place or be something that's sufficiently fascinating for me that I want to look into it further. So again it's about presentation style of the person doing it , really it's down to that. At the end of the day, whether they make me want to look into things further. And I think that the video sort of gives you the basic information – the background if you like and then it's up to you how much more effort you want to put in to do anything further beyond that.

Mary-Ann: Sure. SO are you're saying the video needs to be the hook that kind of reels you in to be interested in the content so that you do the other things. Is that what you're saying?

Marlene: Yeah, yeah. Or like it's the skeleton that everything else hangs on. It's surrounding everything else.

Mary-Ann: And just out of interest, you're saying that there needs to be something that the course hangs on. And in this case, that something is video. But if I were to take the video away and say: "Here's the course, here's the same material". You've got the transcripts. So instead of watching the presenter present, you've got a dead piece of paper in front of you. Do you feel like those transcripts would play the same role?

Marlene: No, no, not at all. It's got to be , even though it's a video, it's got to be a person. It's got to be that human interface even though it's the video. I wouldn't get the same out of – the video. If the video wasn't in it I probably wouldn't have had the engagement with it because I wouldn't feel, I wouldn't want to look at the extra material or anything like that. I find it quite off-putting and quite daunting having to plough through it all just reading. Whereas if you've got somebody there speaking to you and listening, that's much easier for you I think to absorb and assimilate concepts and information.

Mary-Ann: Ok, sure. Marlene actually that's everything I wanted to ask you. I think the last thing I wanted to ask you was if there's anything else that perhaps I didn't cover that you wanted to feed back on about the course?

Marlene: I can't think of anything, I told you I don't like the assignments. I don't mind the quizzes but sometimes I think that the answers are too near each other and I find that quite difficult to distinguish between the right (answers) with the quizzes in some of the courses. But on the whole I think I've done about [inaudible] slightly more and I haven't done one yet that I've not enjoyed or that was really badly put together so I think on the whole, they're all pretty great and think the only difference really is probably [inaudible].

Mary-Ann: Ya, ok. No that makes sense. It's also about how you choose the courses. It will hook you if you if you're already interested right, so that's your motivation for doing it.

Marlene: I mean having said that, I have done one or two that I didn't have any particular interest in but I just thought, "Oh that sounds different, I'll give it a go and see" And that's how [inaudible].

Mary-Ann: Ok Marlene, thank you so much, and again, I'm really sorry about the mix up the last few times but I'm very glad that I got to talk t o you eventually. So thank you very much for your time, I really do appreciate it.

Marlene: Yeah, I hope you have a successful career and a successful result on your research.

Mary-Ann: Thank you very much. I hope so too. And this definitely does help so thank you for supporting me in my research. I really do appreciate it. Ok  
Marlene, have a wonderful weekend.

Marlene: Thank you.

Mary-Ann: Bye

Marlene: Bye

## 8.6 Appendix F – Consent form

Link to [form](#)

### **Thank you for showing interest...**

Hello, and thank you for showing interest in my research. This is an invitation to participate in a research project. I am conducting this research as part of my Master's mini dissertation which aims to better understand which elements of video lectures are important to learners participating in free online courses.

If you are interested in participating in the research, read on. If not, simply close this window in your browser.

Should you choose to participate, there are several ways in which you could assist. I will be sending out a very short questionnaire each week over the 6 week period of the course to gather data about how engaging you found each video lecture. In addition, during the time in which the course runs, I will be monitoring the discussion forums to observe learner engagement in the course. Once the course is complete, I will interview a number of learners to find out more about how you experienced the course, and particularly, the video lectures.

You may choose to participate in one, two, or all three of these research activities. There is no obligation to carry on with the research for the full duration, so you are free to withdraw as a participant in the research at any point.

If at any stage you wish to withdraw or ask a question, please send me an email at mfife85@gmail.com. You may also want to contact my supervisor, Dr. Cheryl Brown (cheryl.brown@uct.ac.za), if you are unhappy with my conduct.

Best wishes,

Mary-Ann Fife (Master's Student)

**Please tick which aspects of the research you are interested in (you may tick more than one).**

Completing the weekly questionnaires

Allowing you to view and analyse my participation in the discussion forums

Being contacted for an interview after the course has finished

**Please read through the following information carefully**

The research results will be used in the following ways:

- To help the University of Cape Town make better informed decisions when designing free online courses
- Contribute to a Master's Thesis
- The findings may be shared in external forums such as seminars and conference presentations

Confidentiality: According to the FutureLearn research policy, you will have to be acknowledged in the research report. This will be done as a footnote, however and your full name will not be used in the main body of the report.

Recording: Audio recordings from interviews will be used for analysis and illustration in my master's thesis and possibly additional presentations with your permission. Original recordings will be stored on a hard drive only accessible to the project researchers and can be destroyed at any time at your request.

Withdrawal from the research: If you are unhappy with any part of the research please let me know, you can withdraw at any time. Should you feel your complaint has not been handled effectively you can contact Dr. Cheryl Brown [cheryl.brown@uct.ac.za](mailto:cheryl.brown@uct.ac.za)

### **Permission**

I have read and understand the above text and grant the researcher permission to contact me

I agree

I do not agree

### **Contact details**

Name and surname

Email address

Current age

Skype ID

Current city