

Preface

Marina Orsini-Jones¹ and Simon Smith²

This special issue collection derives from an international symposium held at Coventry University (CU) on the 29th and 30th of June 2017: *BMELTT (Blending MOOCs for English Language Teacher Training) – the Symposium: Flipping the Blend through MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning), MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and BOIL (Blended Online Intercultural Learning) – New Directions in CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning)*³. The symposium was jointly funded by an English Language Teaching Research Award (ELTRA) by the British Council, by Coventry University (School of Humanities, Faculty of Arts and Humanities) and by staff based in the Disruptive Media Learning Laboratory (DMLL), based in the Lanchester Library at Coventry University. The symposium attracted around 100 participants from over ten countries around the world and provided a snapshot of how CALL is evolving in the 21st century. The somewhat provocative title aimed at stimulating a discussion on how new technologies are supporting the development of fluid blended learning models, where existing technologies are re-purposed for the pedagogical needs and wants of their users.

The conceptualisation of ‘blended learning’ has evolved considerably since it was explored by [Bonk and Graham in 2006](#). MOOCs, MALL, and Online Intercultural/International Learning (OIL) have provided innovative opportunities for ‘distributed flip’ models ([Sandeen, 2013](#)), where learners in distant locations can engage in blended social-collaboration in multiple modes, blending face-to-face activities in classroom settings with discussions on institutional Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) (like Moodle, BlackBoard,

1. Coventry University, Coventry, United Kingdom; lsx008@coventry.ac.uk

2. Coventry University, Coventry, United Kingdom; ab3336@coventry.ac.uk

3. https://youtu.be/tUJqybg_qIM

How to cite this chapter: Orsini-Jones, M., & Smith, S. (2018). Preface. In M. Orsini-Jones & S. Smith (Eds), *Flipping the blend through MOOCs, MALL and OIL – new directions in CALL* (pp. xv-xxii). Research-publishing.net. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2018.23.783>

and Canvas), enhanced by global interactions on Open Educational Resource (OER) platforms, such as MOOCs (e.g. *FutureLearn*⁴ and *Coursera*). The affordances of Web 2.0 technologies can blur the lines between face-to-face and blended modes of delivery, between formal and informal learning, and between teachers and learners.

The discussion with the participants who took part in the round table at the BMELTT symposium, which included one of the partners from China and all the partners from the Netherlands who had taken part in the ELTRA project – see [Orsini-Jones, Conde Gafaro, and Altamimi \(2017\)](#) (including some students), illustrated moreover that many of the terms used in CALL are often interpreted in different ways and given different teaching and learning contexts. For example, the conceptualisation of ‘MOOC’ would appear to be closer to an OER in the UK, while it seems to be closer to an institutional VLE in China.

The symposium also highlighted the need to review how we interpret communicative competence in CALL/MALL Web 2.0 settings (see [Orsini-Jones & Lee, 2018](#) on this point). An interesting feature of the symposium contributions were the talks by ‘expert students’, such as Minh Tuan Phi and Yan Jiao, who carried out blended MOOC curricular evaluations and research based on studies previously conducted by their tutors. This provided an interesting role-reversal perspective on blended-MOOC flips.

The first chapter of this collection is based on the keynote by **Agnes Kukulska-Hulme** on day one of the BMELTT symposium (29th of June): *Mobile assistance for personal learning on a massive scale*. Kukulska-Hulme, based at the Open University, reports on an interesting project she is carrying out where a MALL App has been designed to support the English language needs of refugees in a contextual way, guiding them through the services they need to access. This project provides an excellent example of the kind of research-informed “ethical CALL” (or MALL) that can be produced with the support of new technologies.

4. <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/understanding-language>

The second chapter, *MOOCs as a new technology: approaches to normalising the MOOC experience for our learners*, is the plenary from the second day of the symposium (30th of June) by **Stephen Bax** (Open University), when Stephen entertained us with pictures of very odd technology that never became normalised, e.g. ‘The Isolator’ (see the presentation available at the link in the references to this section, [Bax, 2017](#)). In chapter two, Bax discusses MOOC ‘normalisation’, using as starting points his seminal papers *CALL, Past, Present and Future* ([Bax, 2003](#)), *Normalisation revisited: the effective use of technology in language education* ([Bax, 2011](#)), and his most recent book on MOOCs with Kan ([Kan & Bax, 2017](#)). He outlines the current landscape with regard to language learning MOOCs, drawing on successful Open University projects in Spanish and Italian. It looks critically at where language MOOCs seem to be potentially most valuable, and also at aspects of the experience which seem to have impeded normalisation.

In chapter three, *What our MOOC did next: embedding, exploiting, and extending an existing MOOC to fit strategic purposes and priorities*, **Kate Borthwick**, Director of Programme Development (online and blended learning) at the University of Southampton, reports on the evolution of the creation, evaluation, and continuous re-design of the MOOC *Understanding Language: Learning and Teaching*⁵, which she has managed in collaboration with the British Council for seven runs to date (at the time of writing, May 2018). She concludes by discussing how a MOOC can support the key priorities of a Higher Education institution, marketing included.

In chapters four and five, ‘expert students’ discuss the advantages and disadvantages of integrating MOOCs into the curriculum of the Master of Arts (MA) in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics at Coventry University. The two chapters align with previous related literature on the role-reversal thresholds concept pedagogy model ([Orsini-Jones, 2014](#)), where ‘expert students’ engage with research topics that have been explored by their tutors and,

5. <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/understanding-language>

in doing so, help them (the tutors) to see their practice and research through the students' eyes (as also discussed in [Orsini-Jones et al., 2017](#)).

In chapter four, *Integrating a MOOC into the MA curriculum: an 'expert' student's reflections on blended learning*, **Minh Tuan Phi**, MA in ELTAL alumnus, currently Academic Coordinator, IvyPrep Education in Hanoi, Vietnam, presents a student-centred view of the integration of the MOOC discussed by Borthwick into the curriculum of the MA in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics at Coventry University. The study reports on how he decided to replicate related studies carried out by [Orsini-Jones \(2015\)](#) for his MA dissertation and explores how a blended MOOC approach impacted on his beliefs and his identity as an autonomous teacher of English, which he had also explored in a previous related publication ([Phi, 2017](#)).

In *Understanding learner autonomy through MOOC-supported blended learning environments: an investigation into Chinese MA ELT students' beliefs* – chapter five – **Yan Jiao**, another alumnus of the MA in ELTAL and currently employed as teacher trainer at Harbin International Centre for Cultural Exchanges in China, also links to the theme of MOOCs and their integration into the formal curriculum. Like Phi's, this work is based on the author's MA dissertation, but it discusses a different MOOC: *Exploring the world of English language teaching* ([Jiao, 2018](#)). Also like Phi, Jiao explores the troublesome nature of autonomy in language learning for his Chinese peers and discusses how the MOOC integration can support them with understanding this concept. His interesting findings illustrate how experienced Chinese teachers on the MA programme appear to pay 'lip service' to the adoption of autonomy in theory, but do not apply it in practice when engaging in micro-teaching, while less experienced teachers on the MA in ELTAL are more willing to embrace pedagogies that are alien to their Confucian teacher-centred contexts/background.

This collection also contains two chapters that relate to OIL, also called Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE), Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), telecollaboration (see [Orsini-Jones & Lee, 2018](#), on this), or Virtual Exchange (VE) in the Erasmus+ literature. The title of the symposium referred

to BOIL, which was a bit ‘tongue in cheek’ and was meant to highlight the face-to-face side that is normally inherent in OIL projects, but which gets lost in the ‘O’ for online. In the first study – chapter six – *OIL for English for business: the intercultural product pitch*, **Andrew Preshous**, Senior Lecturer in Academic English at Coventry University, **An Ostyn**, Business English Lecturer at VIVES University College (Kortrijk, Belgium), and **Nicole Keng**, Lecturer in English at the University of Vaasa, Finland, report on how OIL helps to integrate soft skills into the academic curriculum, as well as providing students with international interaction opportunities and develop intercultural awareness. In this project, Malaysian, Chinese, and Indonesian International Business students in the UK established links with their Belgian or Finnish peers online using a tailor-made Moodle platform, then delivered a product pitch presentation before responding to another group’s output. Students’ feedback on the project was very positive and the tutors were also pleased with the level of digital literacies practised by students.

The second piece of work on OIL, *A role-reversal model of telecollaborative practice: the student-driven and student-managed FloCo (Florida Universitària/Coventry University)* – chapter seven – is by **Elwyn Lloyd**, Senior Lecturer in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), **Abraham Cerveró-Carrascosa**, Lecturer in English Language Teaching at the Unitat d’Educació, Florida Universitària in València, Spain, and **Courtney Green**, a Coventry English and TEFL third year undergraduate student currently on her placement abroad at the Florida Universitària to teach English. This chapter reports on *FloCo*, a telecollaborative project where, like in the research reported by Phi and Jiao, the roles of teacher and student were reversed. Green had taken part in the online intercultural exchange *MexCo* (Mexico/Coventry), between Coventry and Mexico ([Orsini-Jones et al., 2017](#)), in her first year at university and decided to set up a similar exchange between the class of students she was teaching in Spain and Year 1 students on Spanish degrees at CU in collaboration with Lloyd and Cerveró-Carrascosa. The shared ‘expert student’ staff reflections on the project are reported in this chapter and compared with the outcomes of related online intercultural exchanges (e.g. *MexCo* and *CoCo: Coventry/Colmar*).

In *Chinese segmentation and collocation: a platform for blended learning* – chapter eight – **Simon Smith**, Senior Lecturer in Academic English and Course Director for English for Business, discusses an innovative approach to teaching Mandarin through blended learning with a corpus-based platform. Smith argues that very little research has been carried out on inductive or autonomous learning in the realm of collocation acquisition. He proposes a new Chinese implementation of a trusted corpus-based platform, currently available for English learning, accompanied and enhanced by a data-driven approach to Chinese segmentation, whereby different ways of carving up a given sentence are selectively displayed to the learner.

In the final study in this collection – chapter nine –, *Student-teachers' beliefs concerning the usability of digital flashcards in ELT*, **Marwa Alnajjar** and **Billy Brick** report on an interesting qualitative study on the beliefs of student-teachers on the MA in English language teaching at Coventry University regarding the usability of three digital flashcard websites to teach English language. The study reports that despite their positive feedback on this new technology, participants appeared reluctant to adopt it because they did not feel comfortable with teaching it to their students. This discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and teachers' practice, which also emerged from Jiao's study in this collection, appears to be a recurrent theme in language teacher education. It is hoped that collections of practice-oriented papers on CALL like this one can dispel language teachers' fear of technology, go beyond the 'wow' factor, and support the normalisation of useful new CALL platforms.

We hope that the readers enjoy the variety of OIL, MALL, MOOC, and other e-learning assisted language learning studies reported here. We would like to thank all the contributors and a very heartfelt thank you also goes to the reviewers who volunteered to support the editing of this collection, namely: Kate Borthwick, Mike Cribb, David Jones, and Fiona Lee. A very special thank you goes to Qian Kan and Andrew Bax for helping with the writing up of Stephen's chapter and to Andrew Bax and family for granting us permission to write up the chapter from the video-recording.

References

- Bax, S. (2003). CALL – past, present and future. *System*, 31(1), 13-28. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X\(02\)00071-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(02)00071-4)
- Bax, S. (2011). Normalisation revisited: the effective use of technology in language education. *IJCALLT*, 1(2), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.4018/ijcallt.2011040101>
- Bax, S. (2017). *MOOCs as a new technology: approaches to normalising the MOOCs experience for our learners*. Paper presented at the B-MELTT: Flipping the Blend through MALL, MOOCs and BOIL – New Directions in CALL Symposium, Coventry, UK: Coventry University. <https://youtu.be/S1ZJf74HxnA>
- Bonk, C. J., & Graham, C. A. (2006). *The handbook of blended learning: global perspectives, local designs*. Pfeiffer/Wiley.
- Jiao, Y. (2018). *Understanding learner autonomy through MOOC-supported blended learning environment: an investigation into Chinese MAELT students' beliefs*. MA dissertation submitted at Coventry University, Coventry, for the award of an MA in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics.
- Kan, Q., & Bax, S. (Eds). (2017). *Beyond the language classroom: researching MOOCs and other innovations*. Research-publishing.net. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2017.mooc2016.9781908416537>
- Orsini-Jones, M. (2014). Towards a role-reversal model of threshold concept pedagogy. In C. O'Mahony, A. Buchanan, M. O'Rourke & B. Higgs (Eds), *Threshold concepts: from personal practice to communities of practice*. Proceedings of the National Academy's Sixth Annual Conference and the Fourth Biennial Threshold Concepts Conference [e-publication], January 2014, NAIRTL. http://www.nairtl.ie/documents/EPub_2012Proceedings.pdf#page=88
- Orsini-Jones, M. (2015). Integrating a MOOC into the MA in English language teaching at Coventry University: innovation in blended learning practice. *Higher Education Academy*. https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/marina_orsini_jones_final_1.pdf
- Orsini-Jones, M., Conde Gafaro, B., & Altamimi, S. (2017). Integrating a MOOC into the postgraduate ELT curriculum: reflecting on students' beliefs with a MOOC blend. In Q. Kan & S. Bax (Eds), *Beyond the language classroom: researching MOOCs and other innovations* (pp. 71-83). Research-publishing.net. <https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2017.mooc2016.672>

- Orsini-Jones, M., & Lee, F. (2018). *Intercultural communicative competence for global citizenship: identifying rules of engagement in telecollaboration*. Palgrave MacMillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58103-7>
- Orsini-Jones, M., Lloyd, E., Cribb, M., Lee, F., Bescond, G., Ennagadi, A., & García, B. (2017). Embedding an online intercultural learning project into the curriculum: the trouble with cyberpragmatics. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (IJCALLT)*, 7(1), 50-65. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCALLT.2017010104>
- Phi, M. T. (2017). Becoming autonomous learners to become autonomous teachers: investigation on a MOOC blend. *International Journal of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Teaching*, 7(4) 13-32. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCALLT.2017100102>
- Sandeen, C. (2013). Integrating MOOCs into traditional higher education: the emerging “MOOC 3.0” era. *Change*, 45(6), 34-39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2013.842103>



Published by Research-publishing.net, a not-for-profit association
Voillans, France, info@research-publishing.net

© 2018 by Editors (collective work)
© 2018 by Authors (individual work)

Flipping the blend through MOOCs, MALL and OIL – new directions in CALL
Edited by Marina Orsini-Jones and Simon Smith

Rights: This volume is published under the Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives International (CC BY-NC-ND) licence; **individual articles may have a different licence.** Under the CC BY-NC-ND licence, the volume is freely available online (<https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2018.23.9782490057160>) for anybody to read, download, copy, and redistribute provided that the author(s), editorial team, and publisher are properly cited. Commercial use and derivative works are, however, not permitted.

Disclaimer: Research-publishing.net does not take any responsibility for the content of the pages written by the authors of this book. The authors have recognised that the work described was not published before, or that it was not under consideration for publication elsewhere. While the information in this book is believed to be true and accurate on the date of its going to press, neither the editorial team nor the publisher can accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions. The publisher makes no warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein. While Research-publishing.net is committed to publishing works of integrity, the words are the authors' alone.

Trademark notice: product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Copyrighted material: every effort has been made by the editorial team to trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyrighted material in this book. In the event of errors or omissions, please notify the publisher of any corrections that will need to be incorporated in future editions of this book.

Typeset by Research-publishing.net
Cover design by © Raphaël Savina (raphael@savina.net)
Cover illustration © Marina Orsini-Jones

ISBN13: 978-2-490057-16-0 (Ebook, PDF, colour)
ISBN13: 978-2-490057-17-7 (Ebook, EPUB, colour)
ISBN13: 978-2-490057-15-3 (Paperback - Print on demand, black and white)
Print on demand technology is a high-quality, innovative and ecological printing method; with which the book is never 'out of stock' or 'out of print'.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.
A cataloguing record for this book is available from the British Library.

Legal deposit, UK: British Library.
Legal deposit, France: Bibliothèque Nationale de France - Dépôt légal: juin 2018.
