

# Webinar

## Why universities invest in MOOCs – the importance of the social dimension

**When:** Friday 1 December, 15.30-16.30 [CET](#)

**Where:** Online via Adobe Connect (link to the meeting room will be sent to all registered participants 1-2 days before the webinar)

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The MOOC hype in the media might be over, but investments in and the uptake of MOOCs are increasing significantly worldwide. There is no doubt that European HEIs joined the MOOC movement later, but contrary to the developments in the US, European HEIs are now engaging more with MOOC development and production. Various studies demonstrate that a large percentage (at least 40%) of European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) seems to have developed a MOOC or is planning to develop a MOOC.

The question being considered in this webinar is why HEIs are investing in MOOCs, the role of political environments and educational values in different regions and if this support the use of MOOCs for social inclusion.

### In the webinar you will meet:



**Dr. Nathaniel Ostashewski** is an Assistant Professor in the Center of Distance Education at Athabasca University where he is focused on research and practice of online and blended education. Nathaniel holds a Doctor of Education in Distance Education and Masters of Education in Instructional Design. He has worked as educator, media producer, academic consultant, instructional designer, social media researcher, and a dance choreographer. Since 2009 he has been designing and researching Open Learning and MOOCs that support professional learning for educators around the globe.



**Darco Jansen** is programme manager at EADTU

Darco is responsible for development of different long term themes for EADTU on Online Education, MOOCs and OER, Employability and on Open and Social Innovation. Darco's fields of expertise are e-learning, open innovation, non-/informal learning and workplace learning. He worked for over 20 years at the Open Universiteit of the Netherlands in different management positions.

Since 2012 Darco coordinated and participated in over 10 European projects. During recent years the focus relates to stimulate and

demonstrate a strong MOOC uptake in Europe. In this context, Darco is the coordinator of the first pan European MOOC initiative OpenupEd, coordinator of several European projects (HOME, SCORE2020) and he is partner of other MOOC projects (e.g., BizMOOC, MOONLITE and ECO).



**Timothy Read** is a senior lecturer in the Department of Computer Languages and Systems at UNED, Spain. He has held a range of positions in the university government at UNED and is currently Pro-Vice Chancellor of Methodology and Technology. He is an EDEN Fellow and also the cofounder of the ATLAS research group and is currently working in European and nationally funded projects in the area of mobile assisted language learning (MALL) and massive open online courses for languages (LMOOCs).

Since 2012 there have been LMOOCs at UNED which have given us the opportunity to explore how these courses function and what their strengths and weaknesses are. As well as the course content and resources, the social interaction possible can also reinforce learning, since language can be both the object of study and the vehicle used to communicate. However, refugees report that camp life can be chaotic and trying to use online courses is far from perfect. Can these courses help them improve their linguistic competences?



**Moderator: Alastair Creelman**

E-learning specialist at Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden. He is involved in several national and international projects and organisations in the field of e-learning, including the MOONLITE project.

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Blog: [Corridor of uncertainty - reflections on technology and education](#)

This webinar is organised by the Erasmus+ project [MOONLITE](#). Supported by [EADTU](#) (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities), [OpenupEd](#), [EMPOWER](#), [UNED](#), [Athabasca University](#) and [Linnaeus University](#).

The Erasmus+ project [MOONLITE](#) (Massive Open Online courses eNhancing Linguistic and Transversal skills for social inclusion and Employability) aims to address the question of how open education, in particular MOOCs, can offer viable solutions for refugees and contribute to better integration and improved employment prospects. You can find out more about our project on our web site: <https://moonliteproject.eu>.

