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“Collaboration In cMOOCs: An Empirical Investigation Of Students’ Exchanges”

Preliminary Communication of Doctoral research

***“Collaboration, Mentoring and Tutoring
in Massive Open Online Courses”***

Université Paris **8** Vincennes-Saint-Denis

École doctorale de *Sciences de l'Éducation*

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Why emphasize **Collaboration** in MOOCs?

MOOCs

have been described as the
worldwide spreading new trend
in Online Education,
as “*collaborative techie learning events*”
(Pappano, 2012)

... *online learning and education*

could be considered in
a more social and less individual dimension
by **creating social bonds**
during and through learning events

The research aim :

Describe and Categorize

collaboration between *students* in cMOOC forums

“Collaborative learning” is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together.”

Leigh Smith, B. and MacGregor, J.T. (1992)

Our initial question :

define and nuance ***Collaboration***
in Computer Supported Learning

COLLABORATION

“a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together”

Dillenbourg P. (1999)

“collaborative activities are becoming integrated within comprehensive environments that include non-collaborative activities stretching over the digital and physical spaces and in which the teacher orchestrates multiple activities with multiple tools”

Dillenbourg P., Järvelä S., and Fischer F. (2009)

COOPERATION

“Cooperative work is accomplished by the division of labour among participants. It is an activity where each person is responsible for a portion of the problem solving, whereas collaboration involves the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve the problem”

Lehtinen, E., Hakkarainen, K.,
Lipponen, L., Rahikainen, M. & Muukkonen, H. (1999)

Methodology

- Empirical
- Case study
- Convenience sampling
- (Participant) observation

Main methodological issues:

Sampling

- Number of MOOCs
- Received taxonomy

Observation

- MOOC platform's policy
- Sessions
- Body of participants

Elaboration

- Manual data processing
- Combining qualitative and quantitative analysis

Research sample of cMOOCs

- **COURSERA** “*Learning to teach online*” University of New South Wales-Australia
 - * several sessions since 2017

- **edX** “*The Leaders of Learning*” HarvardX
 - * content and syllabus produced also in a French version (FUN)

- **FUN Université Numérique** “*Leaders of Learning : les pilotes du changement*”
Harvard/HarvardX and CRI (Centre de Recherches Interdisciplinaires)
 - * French version of the edX MOOC “*The Leaders of Learning*”

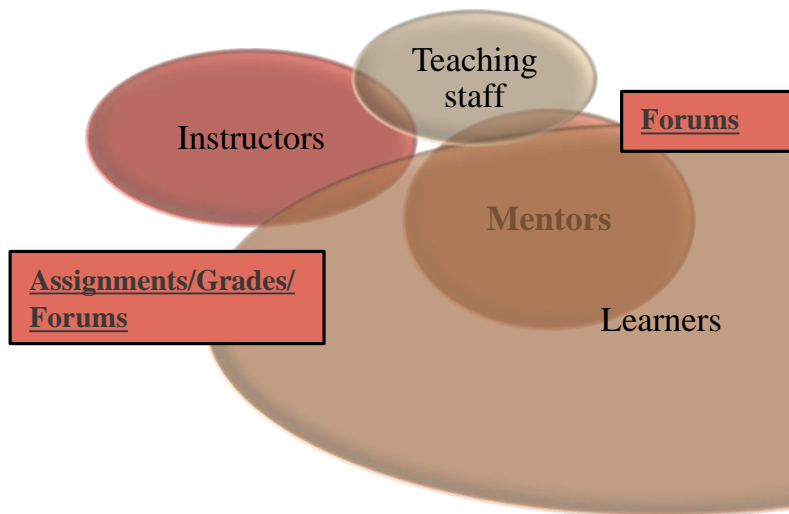
Preliminary results about the body of participants

- Observed cMOOC : “ *Learning to teach online* ”
- Sessions : *February-March 2018* and *all sessions from August 2016 to January 2019*
- Body of participants : *2 Instructors – 1 (2) teaching staff members - 12 mentors - approximate 165 students/learners*

Mentors “learners who generously give their time to help others work through courses they have already completed”

- they don't work for Coursera or for the institution offering the course
- they can't edit course materials
- they can't change grades
- **they answer learner questions in the discussion forums**
- **they post new threads to spark discussion**
- they provide feedback to Coursera staff

They become Mentors after an email invitation, send by Coursera to learners who the provider think would be good candidates. To qualify as a good candidate, *mentors to be* need to pass the course with a good grade and **be active in the course by helping other learners in the forums**. They are invited to take a short training course.



Early Conclusions based on Participants Identification

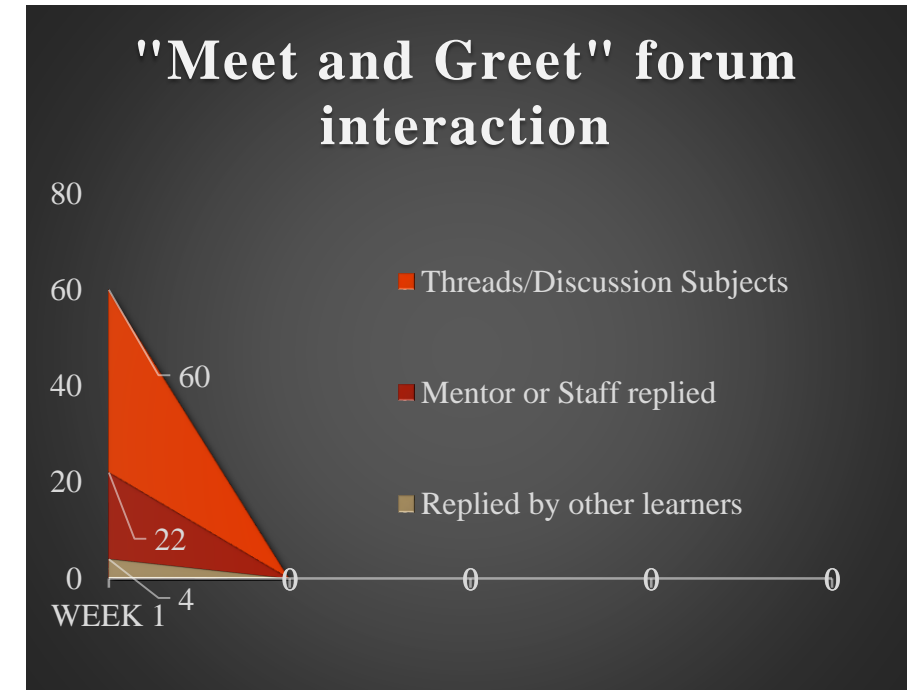
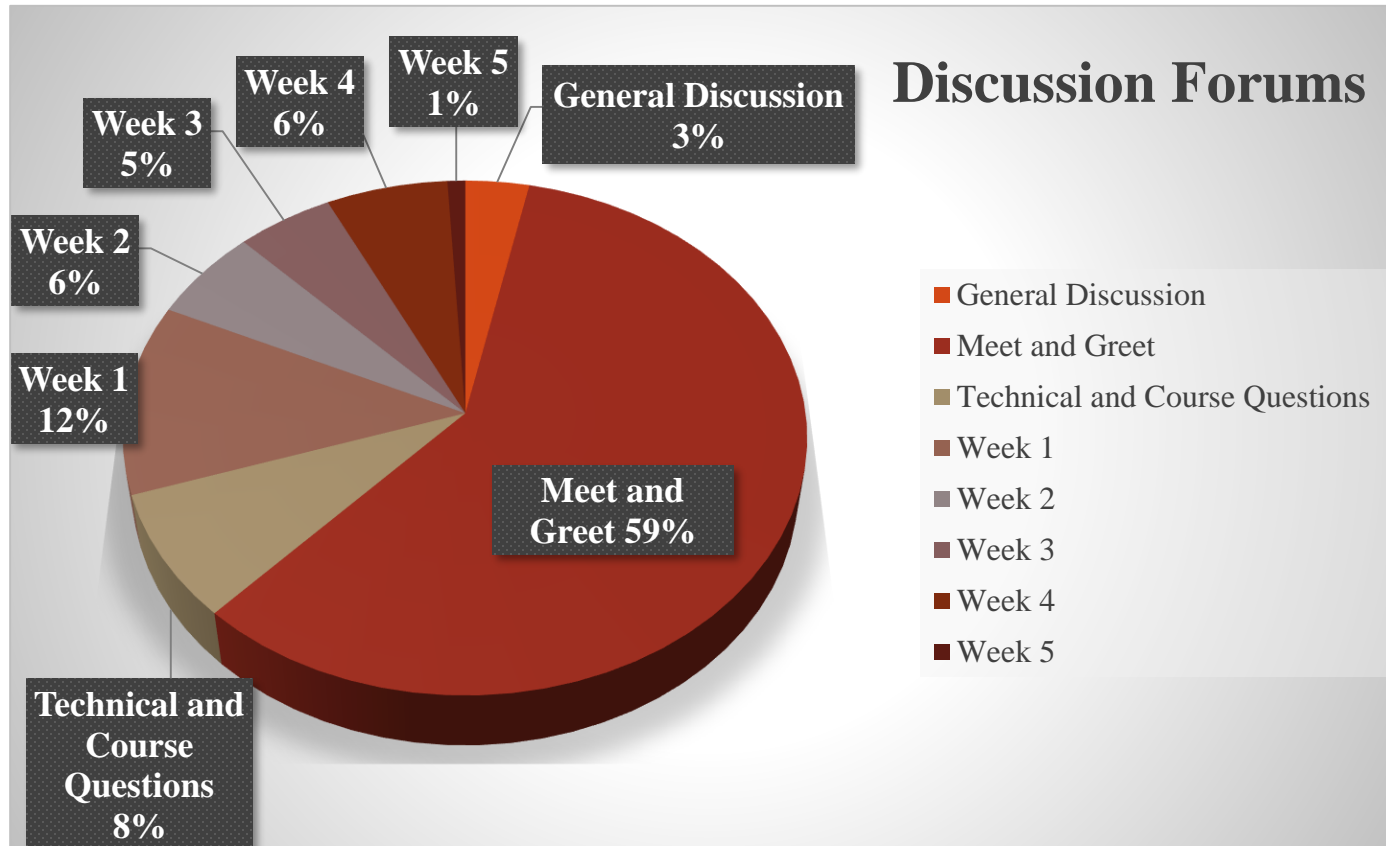
According the “Meet and Greet” Forum and the Zee Map presence of participants

- multiple postings of the same “introduce yourself” post by the same learner
- double postings by the same learner under another name or under “Anonymous”
- presence of learners who’s progress was registered as “completed” although the session is about to begin
- posts in the forum and in the Map under different names.

**Participants’ Identification and Engagement
are major obstacles to
Collaborative Activities Design and Conduct**

Quantitative Analysis of Forums Activity

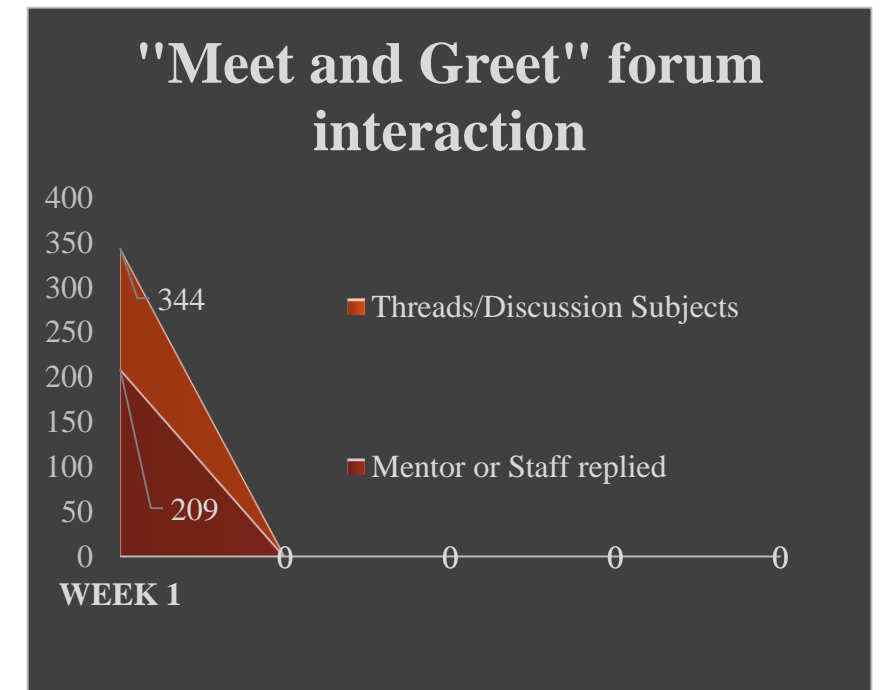
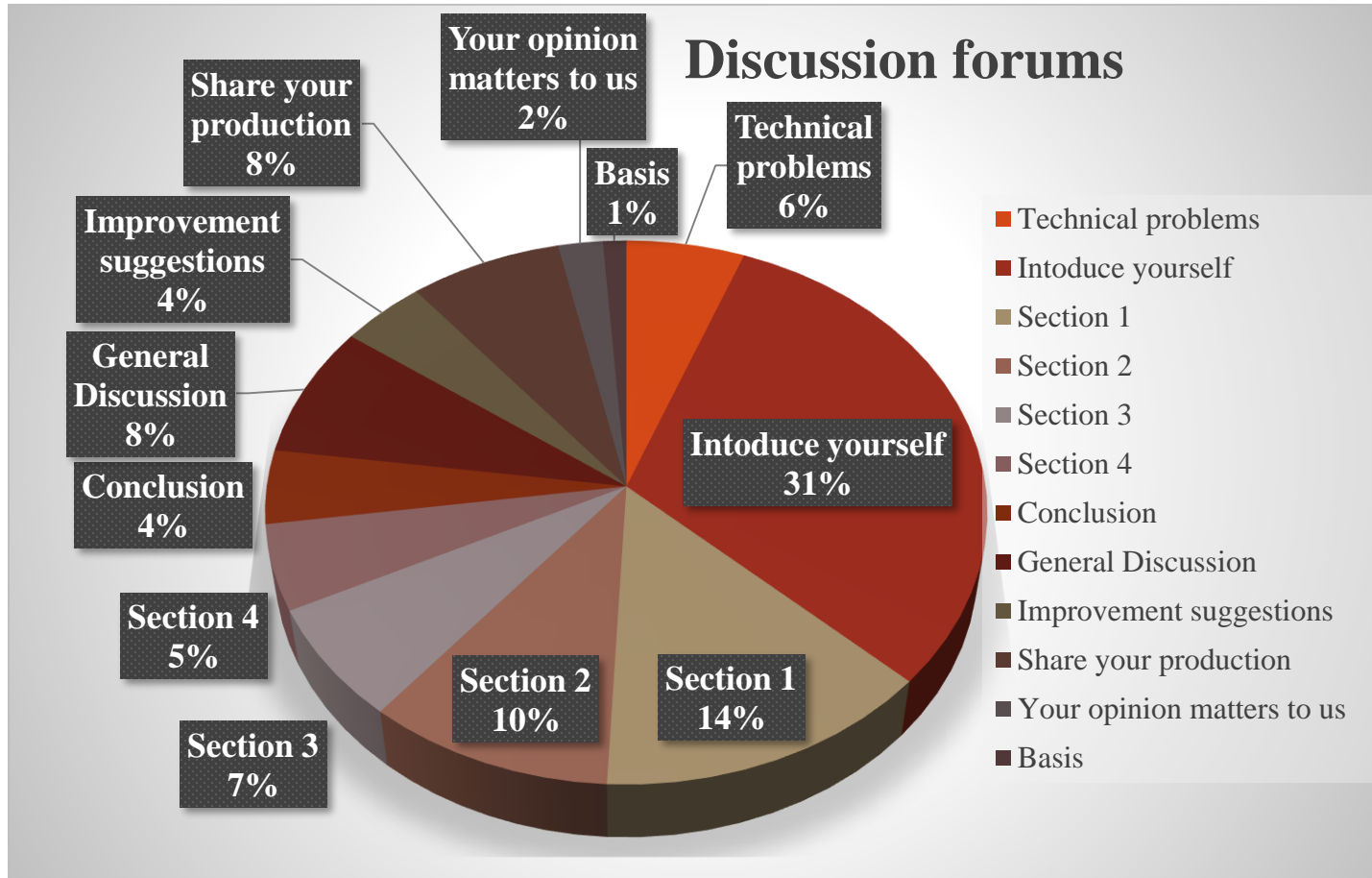
(cMOOC observed: "Learning to teach online" - University of New South Wales-Australia / COURSERA)



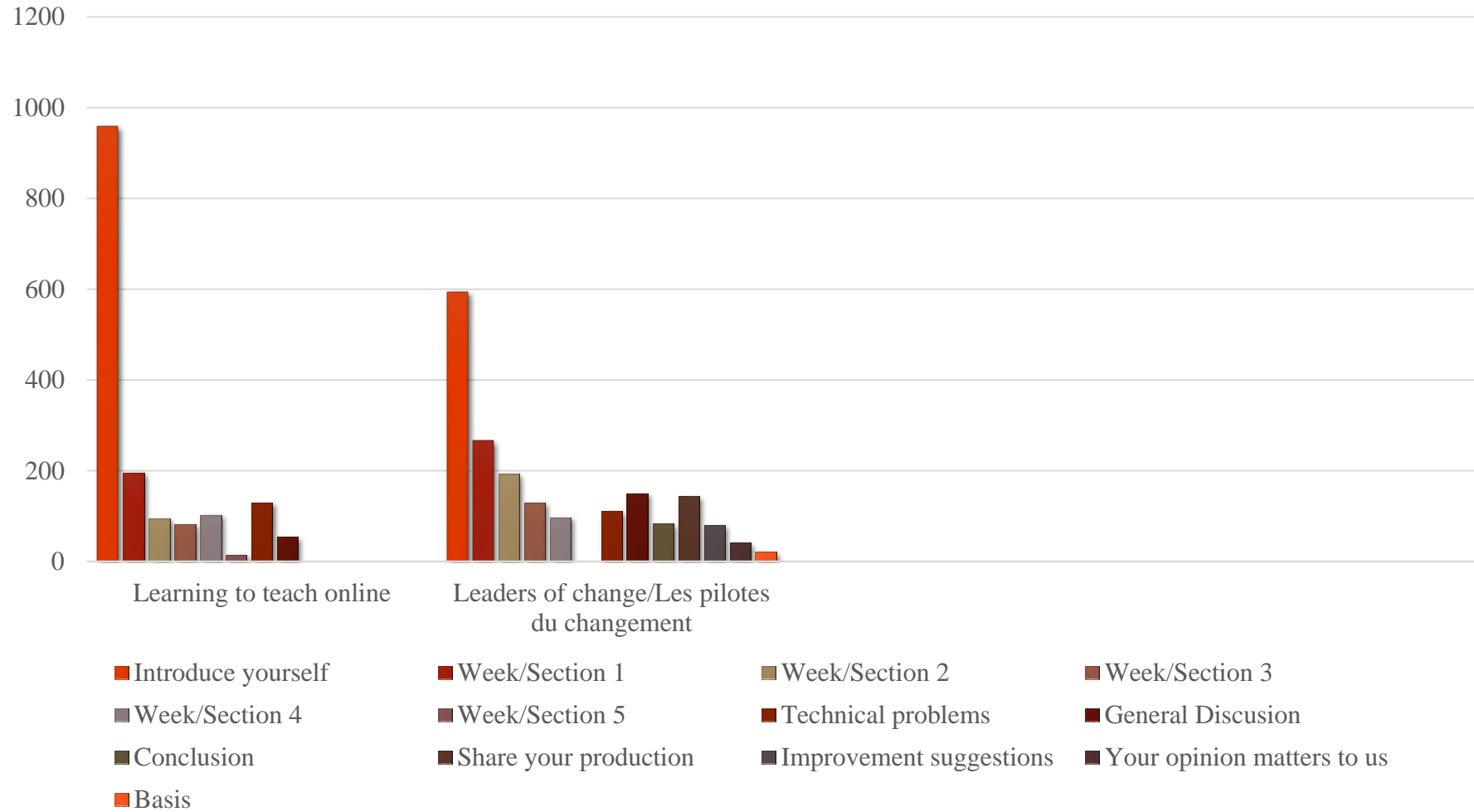
➤ Quantitative Analysis of Forums Activity

(cMOOC observed: “*Leaders of Learning : les pilotes du changement*”

Harvard/HarvardX and CRI (Centre de Recherches Interdisciplinaires))



Comparison of forum activity between the two cMOOCs



Further Observation and Data Elaboration

- **Quantitative analysis of forum activity and comparison** between “*The Leaders of Learning*” - HarvardX / edX and “*Leaders of Learning : les pilotes du changement*” - Harvard/HarvardX and CRI (Centre de Recherches Interdisciplinaires) / FUN Université Numérique
- **Verification of quantitative analysis of forum activity by observation and data elaboration of another random cMOOC sample**
- **Qualitative analysis of forum interaction of the 3 initially observed cMOOCs in order to categorize the interactions of the learners**

Perspectives of the research

- Define collaboration in cMOOCs
- Detect main obstacles to collaboration between the participants
- Propose sectors of improvement of the collaborative interaction