DOCUMENT TITLE:

MANUAL FOR MENTORS AND MULTIPLIERS

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Title of Document	MANUAL FOR MENTORS AND MULTIPLIERS
Work Package	WP5 Social Impact Investment Transnational Design Academy
Output	T3.5
File Name	20210815_Output 5.5_Manual for mentors and multipliers_GK
Number of Pages	7
Dissemination Level	Public
Due date of output	31.12.2021

VERSIONING AND CONTRIBUTION HISTORY

Document Version	V1	
Status	Final version	
Responsible Author	Gorgi Krlev	University of Heidelberg
Editor	Gorgi Krlev	University of Heidelberg
Contributor		
Last version date	13.12.2021	

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Introduction

All course content stays available on the #AirMOOC platform (https://air-mooc.teachable.com/) and YouTube Channel (https://youtu.be/yPUVuh_uFgg). Access is free to anyone.

The aim of this document is to give a couple of pointers to mentors and multipliers on how to use the material. Learning on the platform is self-paced an accompanied by intro videos and a text guiding learners. How to use that specific material is thus self-explanatory to educators, who might wish to use the material. They are free to build on it, for example by developing material that is specific to their country settings, or adapted to the local language.

Similar arguments hold for the availability of videos and other relevant material on the YouTube channel, which educators and pick and choose from and implement in their trainings.

It is more important to make educators understand the basic philosophy behind the design of the learning, with particular considerations of how we can promote online learning further and make the learning process more productive.

Interreg
Danube Transnational Programme
Finance4SocialChange

2. Contents

Many organizations try and digitise all their teaching, but they are finding it very difficult to deliver education online. Here we offers three challenges to conventional wisdom that derive from our experience of designing and delivering #AirMOOC

Massive open online courses (Moocs) have become notorious for their failure rates. Of those who register, considerably more than 50 per cent do not access even half the available material and under 5 per cent actually complete a course. While some commentators suggest how learners can still extract value from a Mooc, others see this as a sign of their complete failure or have called for Spocs (small private online courses) instead.

Yet to advance higher education in an era of digitisation and the coronavirus, small-scale solutions will not work. So we need to ask ourselves: how can we save the Mooc? As a contribution to the debate, I will describe here how we designed the #AirMOOC: Accelerating Investment Readiness Mooc as part of the European Union's Interreg project Finance4SocialChange, and how we departed from conventional wisdom in three ways (although we still don't know how successful it will prove).

The first was to *try to promote thinking instead of understanding.*

Many educators already do this in the classroom, but they tend to do it even more in online teaching. Because they don't receive any immediate feedback, lecturers think that online content needs to be neat, simple and clear. I believe the opposite is true: the more remote the setting, the more challenging the content and style of presentation must be.

When I was taking methods courses during my PhD at the University of Oxford, I found I learned most when a concept was introduced in just enough detail to grasp its essence, but not so much as to make me think, "Yes, of course – that makes total sense." That is when we assume we understand something, only to discover later that we haven't thought the whole thing through.

In designing our Mooc, therefore, our aim was to leave learners with more questions than answers, so they critically assess what they have heard and dig deeper on their own. Does this carry the risk that they feel confused and overwhelmed? Yes, but I believe a slight sense of being overtaxed is more productive for learning, especially in online environments, than having everything spelled out.

Our second goal was to *promote striking insights even in the absence of fancy material.*

Since Moocs can be money-spinners, their production has become highly professionalised. One recent estimate of average costs is $22,000 per hour of online content. On that basis, another estimate of $250,000 per complete Mooc seems on the low side. Although I would have loved such a budget, we had hardly a quarter of that amount available, with less than €15,000 to spend on technical realisation. My only hope was that management wisdom about how "cutting the budget in half will double your creativity" would prove true.

Obviously, we abandoned the idea of shooting with a professional team or placing lecturers in front of green screens in order to insert special effects. We used a graphic recorder to create visual content in a live session and combined this with a simple voice-over (here is an example on the challenges of measuring social impact https://youtu.be/boJ8zgn3nOk). We self-recorded statements and interviews, which meant being speaker, camera operator, cable guy and sound recordist all at the same time. We even switched to recording interviews on Skype. Although this has consequences for the quality of the video material, it doesn't necessarily make it any less engaging, given that some of the most successful content on YouTube was self-recorded by individuals on their laptops (here is an example of such a self-recorded video on impact-oriented strategy https://youtu.be/MSz3CqF8mJE).

The biggest unexpected upside of conducting interviews online was that it forced everybody to be quick and to the point. Online conversations get tedious very quickly; short recordings lower the risk that a video is too long-winded for viewers to take in. An eye-opener for me was when one interviewee wished me luck in cutting down his 45-minute recording to "a compelling three minutes".

**Our final aim was to *promote learning instead of the reproduction of knowledge.***

To check whether students have learned something, online courses often include a number of devices: polls, short quizzes or multiple-choice questions. Yet these formats soon get boring and do not promote the interactive type of engagement seen as critical for genuine learning.

What we do instead is prompt learners to tackle rather complex reflective exercises, such as outlining their organisation's effect on society, and post their responses to an online forum for peers to comment on. There is a high risk that little interaction takes place, but in my experience students learn best when they can share and build on personal experiences, knowledge and expertise. To enable this, educators need to move from assessing whether an answer is right or wrong to judging whether students' ways of thinking and communicating are more or less effective. This often involves providing prompts for further reflection or additional resources that could help them refine their arguments.

This may be a harder way of assessing student performance than through a series of multiple-choice questions, but let's stop pretending that ticking the right box is an accurate measure of knowledge, creativity or the ability to solve complex problems. And isn't this what we should aim for?

3. Documentation in the course intro video

Many of these principles are already provided in the course intro video of #AirMOOC, which as of now has been accessed over 1000 times. It does not only contain input by one of the main course instructors but also by prominent figures from the impact investing and social enterprise worlds.
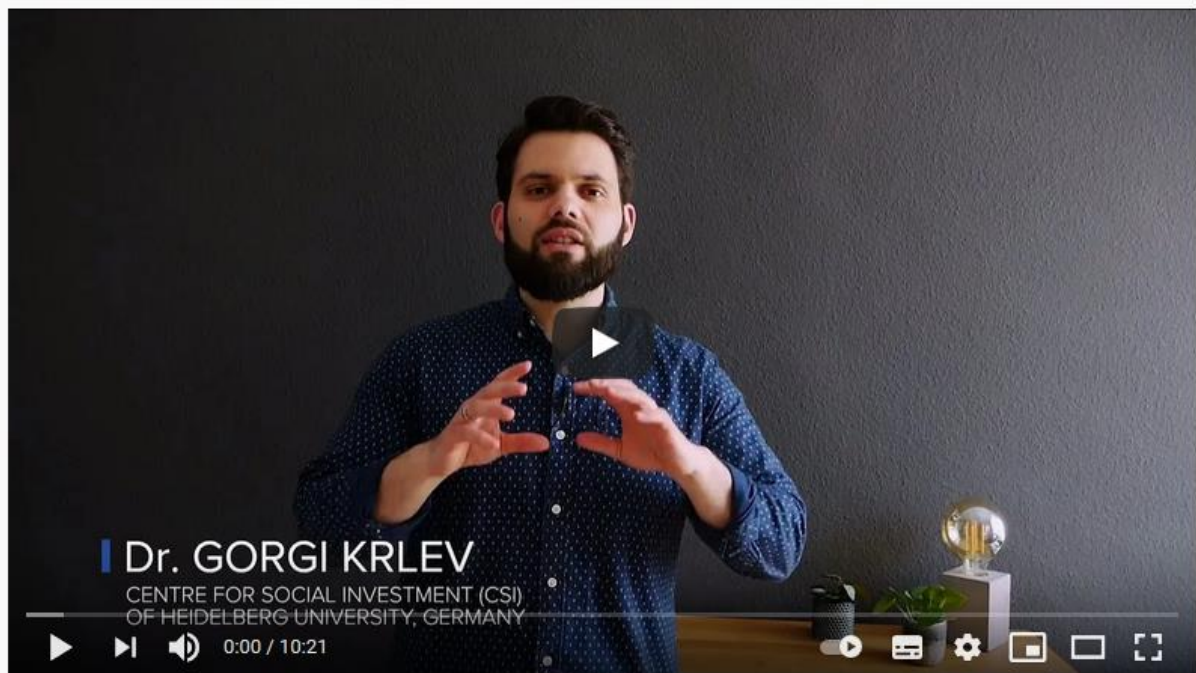
Available at: https://youtu.be/yPUVuh_uFgg

Finance4SocialChange is a project co-financed by European funds (ERDF, IPA, ENI).

Project website: www.interreg-danube.eu/finance4socialchange

4. Conclusion and recommendation

These three key principles have led the design of the Mooc. Of course, they could not mitigate all challenges in full, but they have contributed to what became a well received programme with a diverse set of voices and a focus on inputs from experts, investors and social entrepreneurs from the Danube region.

We believe that while the principles as such proved useful throughout and kept their promise, the challenge of missing interaction in online environments is still a major issue. We therefore recommend using more static online contents (MOOC) in combination with more dynamic ones (for example webinars), or with blended/offline components that enable participants to liaise and interact more. As an important side remark, there was a valuable, reinforcing dynamic between #AirMOOC and #AirCompetition, which represented an integrated intervention to promote impact investing and social entrepreneurship.

Finance4SocialChange is a project co-financed by European funds (ERDF, IPA, ENI).

Project website: www.interreg-danube.eu/finance4socialchange