

Collaborative autoethnographic reflections of facilitators implementing a self-coaching MOOC for social work students

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Abstract: This paper explores the experiences of facilitators in implementing a self-coaching MOOC (massive open online courses) that they developed. The Driscoll Model of Reflection was adopted as the theoretical framework. A collaborative autoethnographic methodology was employed to gather data from the facilitators. Data were analyzed using narrative analysis. The most important lessons learnt were not to own or defend a program, but to be open to collaborate and co-create with all stakeholders within the receiving system. It is important to let the voices of the facilitators and beneficiaries of the program be heard.

Keywords: self-coaching MOOC; social work student support; collaborative autoethnographic; reflection

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Introduction

The development of MOOCs over the past years has propelled a robust discussion among scholars on its benefits and relevance. MOOCs are online courses designed for unlimited participation, providing access to a variety of educational content irrespective of where the learners are (Chakurkar, Naik, Bedekar and Torat 2023). MOOCs are rooted within the principles of openness, engagement and accessibility (Drake, O'Hara, and Seeman 2015). Online education has long been a controversial issue. Open distance e-learning is now acknowledged as the delivery method for social work programs (Gates and Walters 2015; Gad 2023).

The potency of online and traditional face-to-face modes of teaching delivery was explored by various scholars (Kemp and Grieve 2014; Forgey and Ortega-Williams 2016; Afrouz and Crisp 2020; Kumari, Gautam, Nityadarshini, Das and Chaudhry 2021; Gates and Walters 2015). On the one hand, evidence shows that in comparison to in-person methods, open education offers several benefits such as enhanced accessibility, worldwide exposure, and cooperation (Gherhes, Stoian, Fărcasiu and Stanici 2021). However, other studies found no significant difference between the two modes of delivery (Orgey and Ortega-Williams 2016; Paul and Jefferson 2019; Davis, Greenaway, Moore and Cooper 2018). A scoping review was also carried out on educational studies related to online social work to determine its effectiveness, potential, possibilities and difficulties, as well as how effectively it prepares students for this field. Students' performance and satisfaction were found to be comparable for both on-campus and online learners (Afrouz and Crisp 2020).

The emergence of new technological paradigms has led to undeniable changes in the educational context, making it more dynamic and competitive (Hidalgo, Abril and Parra 2020). Hence, technology is embraced and acknowledged by social work academics through the provision of online methodologies to guide students on how to approach their theoretical and practical work. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of online teaching (Lee, Fanguy II, Bligh & Lu, 2022), requiring many social work academics to adjust their assessments. This shift included increased use of video conferencing and social media (Wilson, Schenck, & Grobler, 2000; Umaru & Omame, 2020; Catalano 2022).

Some scholars argue that technology expansion aligns directly with the values of the social work profession, that is, to promote social justice and empowerment (Gates and Walters 2015; Wretman and Macy 2016). This calls for innovation to explore additional types of technological advances, such as MOOCs (Richards-Schuster, Ruffolo, Kwesele and Hoffman 2019). Social work students are taught to demonstrate technological skills to communicate with clients and engage in consultation with lecturers and classmates (McInroy 2019; National Association of Social Workers 2023). Such developments motivate the incorporation of MOOCs in social work education, which may facilitate personal, professional and academic growth and development. Technological advancements in social work education

facilitate and endeavour to broaden the scope of social work education worldwide. Although MOOCs are one form of innovation, little is known about how they might advance global social work (Richards-Schuster, Ruffolo, Kwesele and Hoffman 2019).

Since MOOCs in social work education foster critical thinking, some educators view this as a beneficial trend (Kurzman 2013; Richards-Schuster, Ruffolo, Kwesele and Hoffman 2019; León-Urrutia, Cano, Olmedo and Meneses 2019). Studies indicated that the use of MOOCs contributed to wider knowledge exposure, intrinsic motivation to complete the MOOCs, as well as developing skills to solve problems (Kwesele and Hoffman 2019). Acknowledgement of MOOC challenges by social work academics creates an opportunity to find possible solutions. Social work academics are beginning to venture into MOOC development. For example, some institutions have seen the potential of offering MOOC programs to social work students (Richards-Schuster, Ruffolo, Kwesele, and Hoffman 2019; León-Urrutia, Cano, Olmedo and Meneses 2019). One possible use of MOOCs mentioned in literature is to support social work students through an introductory course at multiple institutions by participation in a single MOOC offered by one institution (Gates and Walters 2015).

The self-coaching MOOC for social work student support

The research for this study was situated in the field of student support, specifically the support of social work students studying within an open distance e-learning context. Against the history of the effects of apartheid and the inclusion of higher numbers of poor and black students in higher education, concerns surrounding poor student success were raised in the early 2000s (Qakisa-Makoe, 2005:44). This led to a number of post-graduate studies (Lawlor 2008; Lintvelt 2008; Alpaslan 2010) within the Department of Social Work within an ODeL institution in South Africa. These studies identified a need for student support to ensure that social work students enrolling for the Bachelor of Social Work within an ODeL institution are equipped to successfully complete their studies (Lawlor 2008; Lintvelt 2008; Alpaslan 2010). As part of her doctoral research, the first author undertook qualitative research to build on the previous research findings and recommendations as well as to identify the specific support needs of social work students who studied at the ODeL university. Based on the findings of focus groups comprising 71 social work students and one-on-one interviews with five employed social workers who recently graduated from this institution, the Intervention Design and Development (IDD) model of Rothman and Thomas (1994) was adapted to develop a self-coaching program. Data were analyzed using the eight steps as described by Tesch (in Creswell 2009) and data verification was undertaken by incorporating Guba's model (as quoted in Krefting 1991) with Yin's (2011) model.

The ‘self-coaching’ program enables the individual student to work towards attaining self-set learning goals (Botha 2015). The aims of the program are to enhance academic student success, facilitate the personal and professional development of students, empower students to take ownership of their learning process, and develop self-reflective and self-development skills as part of lifelong learning. To structure the program, a life coaching model called the ‘Seven Cs and I’ was developed by the first author. The ‘I’ represents the student and the ‘Seven Cs’ refer to the seven actions in the process of the student’s personal, academic, and professional growth. The process is depicted as spirals, implying that the same process can be repeated in any context as a guideline for lifelong learning (Figure 1).

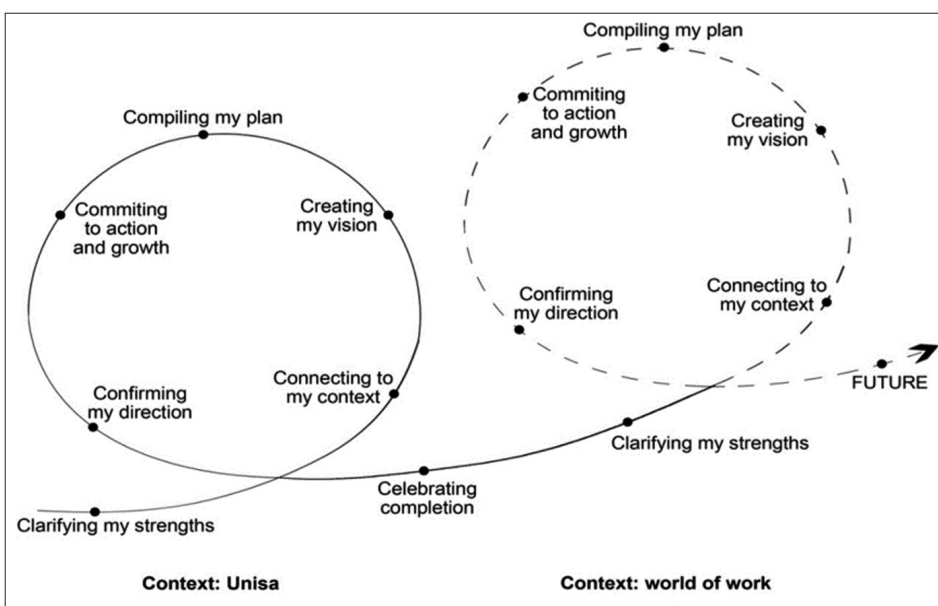


Figure 1. The Seven Cs and I – A life coaching model to support social work students in an ODeL context (Botha 2015)

The self-coaching program built on the Seven Cs and I model consists of eight conversations, two prepared for each level of the social work qualification:

- *Conversation one, level one* (Clarifying my strengths) assists students to articulate their strengths, passion, and values. One example of an activity is that students recall three events where they were at their best.
- *Conversation two, level one* (Connecting to your context) creates opportunity awareness relating to social work and resources within the university. A variety of videos on the niche areas of social work are presented to students.

- *Conversation three, level two* (Creating my vision) enables students to set their academic, personal, and professional goals. Students measure their knowledge and skills against the standards of the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree.
- *Conversation four, level two* (Compiling my plan) teaches students to use a Personal Development Plan (PDP) to plan actions to achieve their goals.
- *Conversation five, level three* (Commitment to change) stimulates students' personal and interpersonal growth through various activities, for example, the 360° Feedback exercise and team building.
- *Conversation six, level three* (Confirming my direction) requests students to monitor their progress through their PDP.
- *Conversation seven, level four* (Celebrating completion) guides students to prepare their own career portfolio.
- *Conversation eight, level four* facilitates the evaluation of the students' journey and prepares them for lifelong learning by celebrating their success and dealing with any unfinished business.

The self-coaching program for social work students was developed into an online program by this ODeL institution as well as a residential facility, piloted by a group of students at both universities. In 2018, the second researcher joined as a colleague in the Department of Social Work. The collaboration facilitated the implementation of Conversations One and Two, which were combined into a MOOC called self-coaching MOOC 101. The MOOC is divided into learning units 0, 1, and 2. Learning unit 0 consists of a welcoming podcast, an explanation of the program, a key to symbols used in the program, and instructions on how to navigate the MOOC. Learning units 1 and 2 comprise various activities assisting the student to reach the objectives set for each conversation. After piloting MOOC 101, permission was obtained from the Department of Social Work to link the program as an open educational resource (OER) to complement the outcomes of the BSW degree on each level – specifically the practical work modules – by facilitating the academic, personal, and professional growth of social work students. In 2021 MOOC 101 was incorporated in a first level module as an OER and accommodated as part of a formative assignment. MOOC 201 was linked to a second level module in 2022, while MOOC 301 was incorporated in a third level module in 2023. MOOC 401 was used as an OER for a fourth level module in 2024.

At the start of the study, a need for mentoring arose in terms of the use and implementation of reflective activities – an important component of the study. The third researcher joined the research team in 2021 and as an experienced research mentor within the healthcare profession and reflective practitioner, guided the reflective activities related to the implementation of the program. A collaborative autoethnographic perspective was subsequently adopted.

Ethical clearance

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant structures of the institution in 2021 to undertake a longitudinal study. The aims of the longitudinal study are to develop an in-depth understanding of the significance of self-coaching MOOCs and to refine self-coaching MOOCs for social work students within an ODeL institution. It is further envisaged that the study could provide insight into the application and relevance of the MOOC for other healthcare professions. The research will contribute towards determining the significance of the self-coaching program and optimising the benefits of these self-coaching MOOCs.

Methods

Collaborative autoethnography is a participative, collaborative, autobiographic and ethnographic form of qualitative inquiry (Lapadat 2017; Nel, Wang, Krog and Lebeloane 2019; Roy and Uekusa 2020). In this approach researchers work in community to collect their autobiographical data. Data are then analyzed and interpreted collectively to gain a meaningful understanding of the experiences and events. This approach aligned with the participative nature of the reflections (Rook 2019) where the researchers shared equal roles, valued the lived experiences of all role players equally and experienced the learning that took place from a similar perspective. The nature of autoethnography justifies the small sample size as it is the research approach that seeks to describe and interpret cultural texts, experiences, beliefs, and practices (ethno) using personal experience (auto) of a researcher (Adams, Ellis, & Jones, 2017:1). This was confirmed by Ellis et al., in Morrow and Kettel (2024: 557) who describes auto-ethnography 'as a form of ethnography' which endeavours to 'systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethnos)'. The analysis examines how the personal is influenced by the social, and how the social is influenced by the personal. Autoethnography is a valuable qualitative research methodology that uses the researcher's personal experiences, feelings, and critical reflections as the primary source of information (Méndez, 2013; Tarisayi, 2023). According to Tarisayi (2023), autoethnography emphasizes the researcher's subjectivity, in contrast to standard research methodologies that strive for detached objectivity. One benefit of autoethnography is that it makes data easily accessible because the researcher uses their personal experiences as a basis for examining a given occurrence (Méndez, 2013). Autoethnography is recognized as a qualitative methodology by some fundamental components. According to Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2013), these essential components include reflexivity, compelling narrative presentation, a focus on human experience, the researcher as subject, and connecting the intimate to

larger cultural contexts. Instead of gathering information from other participants, the autoethnographers base their investigation and sense-making on their lived experiences, embodied sensations, emotional responses, and critical reflections (Adams et al., 2015). The authors of this paper used their personal experiences as the primary source of information.

The following three steps were considered to compile this paper:

Step 1: Based on the paper's goal, the autoethnography approach was selected.

Step 2: The theoretical framework-informed questions were used to collect reflective data from the MOOC facilitators.

Step 3: The participants' experiences were analyzed within the cultural context of higher education, observing the contextual levels of education, the institution and the specific department. To prevent bias, reflexivity was employed.

In the narrative part of this article, reference is made to reflections by authors one, two and three as well as collaborative reflections. First-person pronouns are used in line with the autoethnographic nature of the article.

Collaborative reflection: As researchers, we valued a focus that was more on the cultural interpretation of the self (auto) than on the self and narration. Through reflective activities, for example, regular team discussions and written reflections, we used our experiences and insights related to the implementation of the self-coaching MOOC as a frame through which we interpreted the educational and personal practices. Through a reflexive process, practices could be carefully considered in such a way that the process led to discovery and deeper inquiry, rather than only reporting on experiences. To guide the reflections, the Driscoll Model of Reflection was used. This model also guided the reflexive research-writing process of the research team.

The Driscoll Model of Reflection is a framework that provides structure to reflective activities (Driscoll 1996; Driscoll 2001; Driscoll 2006; Driscoll 2007). Three stem questions are asked about experiences, eliciting a cycle of understanding the experiences (Driscoll 2007). By answering three questions, a researcher starts to analyse the experiences and learn from them. First, the situation or experience and context are described to understand what is going on, thus reflecting on the 'what' question: What was learnt from the experience? This question is followed by the 'so what' question, focusing on the significance of what was learnt, and lastly by the 'now what' question, leading to further exploration of what should be done with the new insight. The first two authors shared their reflections on each question. To enhance objectivity, the third author drew conclusions from the reflections and added further reflections regarding the implementation of the self-coaching MOOC for the support of social work students.

Question One: What?

The ‘what’ question was asked regarding three levels in which the self-coaching program is implemented, namely the educational, the institutional and the departmental contexts.

What are the experiences of implementing the self-coaching MOOC program within the educational context?

Author one

At the time I started to implement the program in 2014, the institution by which I am employed, was the only ODeL tertiary institution offering a social work degree in South Africa. However, other institutions of higher learning were open to doing joint research. Online teaching and the use of OERs were still a novelty – as was the use of self-coaching as an innovative growth technique. In 2020 and 2021, COVID-19 accelerated the digital transformation, which influenced the world and institutions of higher learning to work remotely. Colleagues from other universities were open to innovation and input on the program was welcomed, not only in the field of social work, but also within the broader educational context.

Author two

I had an opportunity to co-present a paper with author one at two national conferences. The audience’s feedback was positive since they were interested in learning more about the MOOC program. Even though we haven’t explored funding extensively, the authors believe that the educational sector will offer funding support, based on the benefits of the MOOC program as it is currently utilized in various national and international institutions of higher learning to complement traditional university learning.

Discussion

Considering the reflections of authors one and two, author three highlighted the following: The experiences of implementing the self-coaching MOOC program within the educational context, as shared by the authors, reflect a transformative journey influenced by both institutional and global shifts. Author one’s initiation of the program in 2014 marked a time when online teaching and OERs were still emerging concepts. The chosen institution, as the only ODeL tertiary institution offering a social work degree in South Africa at the time, embarked on this innovative path, paving the way for potential collaborations with other institutions for joint research. The landscape evolved further in 2020 and 2021, with the global acceleration of digital transformation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift led to increased openness and collaboration

among colleagues from various universities, not only in the field of social work, but also across broader educational domains. The second author's involvement in presenting the MOOC program at national conferences resulted in positive feedback, indicating a growing interest in this innovative approach. While funding exploration has been limited, the belief in potential support from the education sector suggests a recognition of the program's benefits. The MOOC program's adaptability to complement traditional university learning opens opportunities, both nationally and internationally, for future funding and collaboration.

The experiences shared by the first two authors highlight the program's growth from a pioneering initiative to a well-received and potentially widely adopted model within the educational landscape. The positive reception at conferences and the anticipation of funding support promise a positive trajectory for the self-coaching MOOC program in contributing to educational innovation and student support. Furthermore, a global crisis like COVID-19 stimulated creative thinking in the educational landscape resulting in opportunities for new ideas. However, the culture of online learning could impact student participation, since some students with different learning backgrounds may need additional support and guidance. Self-directed learning therefore develops at a slower pace with more time needed to reach a level of independence.

What are the experiences of implementing the self-coaching MOOC program at the university level?

Author one

I found the institution to be overall supportive in implementing the program. A senior colleague in the faculty made me aware of a research and innovation grant for which I applied. I successfully obtained funding to enable me to develop the self-coaching program into an online version. However, I found the institution lacking in technical support, so I had to buy in the support I needed. If I did not have the funding, I would have been stuck.

A colleague from the Social Work Department of a residential institution was interested in the topic of support of social work students and facilitated a joint research project where this institution also developed an online version of the program, and both departments did a pilot study with students. I was amazed at the technical support the colleague from the residential university received. She closely liaised with the information and communication technology (ICT) specialist who also wrote an article on the technical process of converting the self-coaching program to an online version.

In 2017, the institution where I am employed introduced its MOOC platform, and departments and lecturers were urged to develop OERs and utilise the platform. As an ODeL institution, the institution needed to get on board with national and

international trends. This was the gap I was looking for, and I started the process of obtaining permission to convert my unused online program into a MOOC format. I then invited the second author to join me in my effort. We built a relationship with the institutional MOOC coordinator, who is still playing an important facilitative role in the implementation of the self-coaching program. The self-coaching MOOC was one of the first MOOCs from the faculty to be registered. Another MOOC, which was developed and implemented on an institutional level, was the First-Year Experience (FYE) MOOC. There seemed to be some similarities between MOOC 101 and the FYE, as far as the preparation of students to integrate into the institution was concerned. This MOOC became compulsory for all students who enrolled for their first year at Unisa. This reassured us that the self-coaching MOOC program to support social work students is relevant and on track.

As a result of the work related to the MOOC, the authors were invited to present at institutional workshops and conferences – an exciting development in the work.

Author two

I believe the university does offer the support required and that the support is prompted by the curriculum transformation principles of promoting the development of OER by academics to complement teaching and learning. The university has established a support team to offer technical support; for me it is a positive action. Offering a MOOC program requires the support of other role players, the management, academics, and students. When management offers the MOOC support program a chance to prove itself, the likelihood is that it will positively impact student retention and performance. Academics suggested ideas to improve the program are important, while students' participation is critical to improving their overall wellbeing. Barriers impacting MOOC implementation include a lack of institutional, and departmental policies or guidelines that recognise MOOCs. Support from institutions and departments to allow the integration of MOOCs into degree programs is essential. In addition, funding and collaboration with influential scholars will allow visibility of the program.

Discussion

Considering the reflections of authors one and two, author three highlighted the following: The experiences of implementing the self-coaching MOOC program at university level, as shared by the first and second authors, reveal a mix of support and challenges. The first author acknowledges overall support from the institution, securing a research and innovation grant that funded the development of the self-coaching program into an online version. However, she faced a lack of technical support, leading her to seek external assistance. Collaborating with a senior colleague from another institution, a joint research project was initiated, showcasing the need for technical support and collaboration in program development. The introduction of the MOOC platform at our institution in 2017 presented a crucial opportunity for the first author,

who obtained permission to convert her program into a MOOC format. Building a relationship with the institutional MOOC coordinator and receiving support from management, the self-coaching MOOC became one of the first MOOCs registered by the academic faculty within which the Social Work Department falls. The second author emphasises the university's positive response to curriculum transformation principles, providing a support team for technical assistance. Recognising the importance of managerial, academic, and student support for a successful MOOC program, the second author highlights the potential positive impact on student retention and performance. The authors' involvement in workshops and conferences indicates institutional recognition and validation of their work.

The experiences emphasise the importance of institutional support, collaboration, and adaptability in navigating challenges during the implementation of the self-coaching MOOC program at university level. The positive outcomes and recognition received from the institution affirm the relevance and success of the program within the broader educational context. The program's development was supported by key contextual factors, including policy changes, funding, and institutional emphasis on specific niche areas.

What are the experiences of implementing the self-coaching MOOC program at the departmental level?

Author one

When I think of the department and my efforts to implement the self-coaching program, my stomach turns into a knot. I started introducing the program to colleagues at a staff meeting in 2014, even before I graduated. I received suggestions from two colleagues to present the program in detail at a strategy meeting or implement it at another university. This was the first of several presentations to try to persuade colleagues of the value of the program. Other colleagues were supportive of the program, but did not voice their support during meetings. After the program was developed into an online version, I booked a lab to show colleagues how the program works. I could not understand that the university funded the online transformation of the program, but my own department was not interested in implementing it. A mistake I made was to become protective of the program; to feel it is 'me against them'. A suggestion was made to use parts of the program, while I felt the usefulness of the program was how it was structured to provide support to the student throughout the study journey. A senior colleague advised me 'not to fight for the program'. I became despondent and it was only when the second author got involved in 2019 that I again gained the confidence to continue the implementation process. In a way, I felt now it is 'us against them'. We got permission to do a pilot test with MOOC 101 first level, which was done in

2018. At a strategic meeting in 2019, we presented the positive results to colleagues, letting them hear the voices of the students. When we requested permission and ethical clearance to link the longitudinal research study to the implementation of the program, we again experienced resistance from colleagues. This left me feeling vulnerable and demotivated. However, we officially started to implement the MOOCs as a staggered intervention in 2021. From our side we tried to take a full load of responsibilities, and not to be of any inconvenience to the lecturer by preparing the students and processing the MOOCs.

Author two

I feared that resistance to accept change and innovative ideas will affect the implementation of the support program. Fear of testing new ideas may create uncertainty and a lack of open-mindedness. The responsibility of academics is to ensure that students adapt to different circumstances. I appreciated the offering of the program because it supplements students' knowledge about academic work and their personal world. It connects them with various resources. Most importantly, to be their own coach, which strengthens self-reliant students. I collaborated with the first author to offer the program in 2019. However, when an opportunity arises to share feedback with colleagues about the MOOC program, we were expected to justify the importance of the program and its benefits. We needed to hear a positive contribution on ways to improve the support program. We always wished for a positive attitude towards the program. We are grateful that some colleagues and students showed interest and were willing to support the implementation of the program. Due to our busy schedules, limited time is dedicated for face-to-face or online meetings to share our thoughts and experiences about the program with involved lecturers. Positive feedback from students is always received regarding the relevance of the program. From their feedback it is evident that there is a need to continue offering the support required. Obstacles to offering the program effectively include limited digital infrastructure and connectivity. In South Africa, we are experiencing network connectivity issues which affect high-speed internet. For instance, loadshedding (intermittent power supply) affects mobile networks and Wi-Fi. It further causes power outages that disrupt virtual classes or engagements, making it difficult for students to attend lectures or submit assignments on time.

Discussion

Considering the reflections of authors one and two, author three highlighted the following: The experiences of implementing the self-coaching MOOC program at the Social Work Departmental level, as explained by both authors, reveal a mixture of challenges, resistance, and eventual progress. The first author initially faced resistance and a lack of interest from colleagues when introducing the program in 2014. Despite efforts to persuade and showcase the value of the program, there was

limited support within the department. Becoming protective of the program and feeling isolated, the first author encountered further challenges in gaining approval for the pilot study and linking the current longitudinal study to the program. However, with the involvement of the second author in 2019, a shift occurred, and the implementation process gained renewed confidence. The second author acknowledges the fear of resistance to change and innovative ideas within the department. Despite facing the challenge of justifying the program's importance and benefits to colleagues, there is an appreciation for its value in supplementing students' knowledge and fostering self-reliance. Limited time for meetings and discussions hampers communication, but positive feedback from interested colleagues and students reaffirms the program's relevance.

The departmental level experiences highlight the complexities of implementing innovative programs, including challenges such as initial resistance, and a limited collaboration, and a need for ongoing communication as well as a focus on individual career enhancement. The collaboration between the first and second authors has brought a renewed sense of confidence and progress in the implementation of the self-coaching MOOC program, emphasising the significance of persistence and collective support. Teamwork and mutual support serve as essential opportunities in the development of a new program.

Question Two: So What?

Based on your Experiences, what are the Lessons you have learnt from the Implementation?

Author one

I would recommend that you do not try to implement a developed program on your own. As team members, you can support, navigate, and motivate one another. I would have given up many times if it wasn't for the second author's words of encouragement and perspective. At times I felt personally attacked when I experienced resistance. When you work as a team, you can alert your colleague when she becomes over-involved.

Flexibility is key. Be willing to change your program. Be open-minded, but also motivate why you developed it as it is. Link the program to current priorities and policies; you will find that doors are knocked on, then open quicker. Look out for pay-offs for other stakeholders. This could be writing an article together or recognition of their IPMS. If you can, conduct a pilot study early in the process. Let the target group of the program speak on your behalf. When you keep on defending the program, people do not hear you anymore.

Author two

Students' voices assist academics in influencing effective teaching and learning methods. I learnt that giving feedback to students is critical to draw their attention and focus. Change must be viewed as a learning process. Doing something out of one's comfort zone is never easy. There is a need to learn and accept change as well as the willingness to see and view things from a different perspective. Ignorance can prevent one from recognising a good opportunity. Fear of failure and change may hold us back from seeing the bigger picture of support programs, such as this one, that benefit students.

Discussion

Considering the reflections of authors one and two, author three highlighted the following: The lessons learnt from the implementation experiences of the first and second authors provide valuable insights for future endeavours in program development and academic support. The first author emphasises the importance of teamwork, cautioning against attempting to implement a program in isolation. The collaborative effort not only provides support and motivation, but also helps in navigating challenges. Flexibility emerges as a key theme, advocating for adaptability to changes, linking programs to current priorities, and seeking collaborative opportunities with other stakeholders for mutual benefit. The advice regarding conducting a pilot study early on and letting the target group speak for the program underscores the significance of involving those directly impacted by the initiative. For the second author, the influential role of students' voices in shaping effective teaching and learning methods is vital. Acknowledging change as a learning process, the author encourages a willingness to step out of one's comfort zone and embrace new perspectives. Overcoming fear of failure and resistance to change is essential for recognising opportunities that support programs may bring.

The shared lessons emphasise the value of collaboration, flexibility, and the continuous learning process inherent in implementing educational programs as essential opportunities. These insights serve as a guide for future endeavours, fostering a cultural context where diverse voices are heard, and change is embraced for the benefit of students and the broader educational community.

Question Three: What Now?

What will you do differently and What do you think other Educators can learn from your Experience?

Author one

I would work as a team from the start; maybe getting stakeholders from the educational sector, faculty and departmental level involved as part of the team. This will assist the researcher to detach, be more flexible, and link the program to current priorities and policies. I would 'sell' the program more wisely and not try to 'oversell' it from my own perspective. I would let the students speak for the program.

I would want other educators to become aware of the importance of implementing programs or other outcomes of post-graduate studies and to play a facilitative role for colleagues and their students. Why do researchers make all the effort if the results cannot be used in practice? I would advise other educators to use the eco-systems approach when thinking of stakeholders who can become involved in the implementation of the program, for example, departmental, faculty, university, national and international levels. I would advise other educators to understand resistance from others from a gender, race or cultural (academic or societal culture) perspective. I would suggest that other educators learn, like me, to detach from their created programs and put them in service of the intended target group. As one of my lecturers said ages ago: 'Go with the flow!'

Author two

It is essential for facilitators to develop an evaluation questionnaire for colleagues. Offering timely feedback on the progress of the support program during staff meetings will motivate some colleagues who show some interest. This will inform academics about the need to offer a support program to boost the morale of students when navigating online learning. Professional growth and development are key to learning best practices from other successfully implemented support programs. Thus, continuous attendance of training and conferences will add value to the knowledge we have on MOOC support. The program should be marketed effectively during orientation sessions. Promoting the MOOC program in various disciplines for consideration will benefit students. There is a need to strengthen collaboration by having regular meetings with involved academics.

Discussion

Considering the reflections of authors one and two, author three highlighted the following: The reflections of the first and second authors underscore the significance of collaboration in the implementation of the self-coaching MOOC for social work student support. Both authors recognise the need for a team approach from the

outset, involving stakeholders at various educational levels, including the educational system as a whole, the institution and the specific department to ensure flexibility, alignment with current priorities, and effective program promotion. The first author emphasises the importance of detaching from personal perspectives and allowing students to advocate for the program. The second author highlights the importance of ongoing evaluation, timely feedback, and continuous professional development for facilitators. Emphasising the need for effective marketing and collaboration with academics, the second author advocates for strengthening support program initiatives through regular meetings.

The overarching lesson drawn from these experiences is the central role of collaboration. We emphasise the need to refrain from possessing or defending a program, but rather to foster an open, collaborative, and co-creative context involving all stakeholders within the receiving system. The collective voice of those benefiting from the program should be amplified, ensuring that the implementation process is a shared learning journey for all involved. As a continuous learning process, change is best navigated through collaborative efforts and a commitment to listening to the diverse perspectives of stakeholders.

Conclusion

The authors recommend the following related to the implementation of the self-coaching MOOC program or any new innovative program or curriculum:

Positive collaborative relationships within all context levels are essential to support innovative ideas aimed at improving the personal and academic development of social work students. Interdepartmental or inter-institutional committees or projects could be used to market innovative ideas. Since communication is key to gaining collaborative support or co-ownership, there is a need to prioritise a consultative approach to strengthen trust and rapport with all stakeholders and across cultural contexts.

- Different feedback methods – such as individual interviews and online engagements – could be emphasized for all stakeholders to voice their opinions on innovative ideas and contribute to the development of the new program or curriculum.
- Plans may need to be modified as the support program or any new innovative curriculum is carried out. Facilitators must be willing to consider any recommendations and be flexible to changes in the immediate and wider contexts.
- Enhancing students' support is an ongoing endeavour and should be the focus

of support programs, not recognition of developers. Although there might be obstacles, a solid relationship with relevant role players may yield positive outcomes for the institution, academics and students.

- Establishing a collaborative work atmosphere is crucial. Colleagues can collaborate by pooling resources and assistance for example human resources and grants. Participants should be acknowledged through their performance appraisals or joint publications. This will advance the best practices for the student support programs.
- A culture of innovation, where students could be recruited and funded to conduct research on MOOC-related topics, is essential to reinforce the spirit of international co-supervision.
- Guidelines can be developed on MOOC in social work training by the professional body in consultation with social work academics from a South African context.
- MOOC facilitators may collaborate with national and international universities that offer self-coaching MOOCs for social work students to ensure the content of the program reflects real-world practice. This engagement will foster the development of learning materials tailored to local contexts, thus improving comprehension and engagement.
- In collaboration with social work academics and statutory body, the MOOC-based professional development program could be developed for social workers in practice to ensure their personal growth and development.
- The MOOC program can be refined through student and staff feedback on accessibility and relevance.

This paper reflected on the implementation of an online MOOC program for social work students within an educational, institutional and departmental culture and context. Thus, a reflective experience has enabled authors to recognise insights of self and practice. It was essential for authors to express their views on collaborative networks in response to the needs of student social workers. Potential best practices in facilitating the implementation of a new innovative support program were produced by the reflections. 'Collaboration' seems to be the keyword in this collaborative autoethnographic reflection on the facilitation of the self-coaching MOOC for social work student support. Reflection in community, using the Driscoll Model of Reflection to answer the research questions 'what', 'so what' and 'what now' from the viewpoint of the three authors contributed to a multi-perspective on the implementation process of the self-coaching MOOC.

The most important lesson learnt that could be shared with facilitators implementing a new program, is not to own or defend a program, but to be open to collaborating and co-creating with all stakeholders within the receiving system, acknowledging challenges and opportunities within a person, department, institutional and even the society as a whole. Let the voice of those receiving the

program be heard. Change is not about an individual. Change is not about one program. Change is a continuous learning process, contributing to the highest good of all involved.

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