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# POSITION OF THE EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIST IN CREATING VIDEOS FOR A MOOC

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## Abstract

Learning design, educational videos and MOOCs are profusely studied subjects, though they are studied together only on very rare occasions. As the educational technologist (ET) helping with the development of a French for Academic Purposes MOOC, part of the European project Mooc2Move, I worked closely with the other actors to create most videos from scratch: storyboarding, filming and sometimes even editing. But what is the position of the ET in creating videos for a MOOC?

Feedback from the Mooc2Move team has been collected through an online survey. The data was compared to interviews with an ET and an audio-visual technician regarding their experience in creating other MOOCs. Through the video creation process, various aspects of the ET's work come to light: he/she can be part of: the audio-visual team, the teachers' team, and mostly stands in the middle as a mediator between educational and technological aspects.

**Keywords:** educational technologist, MOOC, instructional video, learning design

## 1 INTRODUCTION

I worked for a year on the creation of the French for academic purposes MOOC known as “*MOOC2MOVE : le français pour l'université*” or “Mooc2Move to France”, hereafter referred to as “Mooc2Move”. This MOOC is a 6-week course for students who want to come study in France. It aims to help these students get a better overview of the French academic culture in order to lessen the culture shock and allow them to integrate both more easily and more quickly.

As the educational technologist on the project, I had several missions. I was supposed to go up to implementing the content online. Unfortunately, we had underestimated the creation process and I was unable to reach the implementing part in a year, so it was handled by someone else. I mainly worked on the creation of the MOOC's videos from thinking about the content with the teachers, up to filming some of them, and even acting in a few of them.

To create the videos for MOOC2MOVE, there were 3 levels of people involved. It is quite obvious that the teachers are in charge of the content. They're also the “faces and voices of the MOOC” as they either appear or we can hear them speak in the videos. The audio-visual team is in charge of the technical aspects of filming and editing. What about the educational technologist? At first glance, it looks like not much space is left for them.

I found myself asking the following:

- Between teachers and the audio-visual team, where does the educational technologist stand in creating videos for a MOOC?
- What skills are required here?
- What are the interactions between the educational technologist and the rest of the team?

Leading to the main question: What's the position of the educational technologist in creating videos for a MOOC?

## 2 TERMINOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

Before diving into the analysis of interactions, the terminology as well as the methodology for this study need some explanation.

### 2.1 Videos, MOOCs and educational technologist

#### 2.1.1 Videos

Nowadays, videos are one of the most accessible medium and everyone can create them. Those made for educational purposes have many names: instructional video, educational video, etc. Still, they are widely used as Tessier & Bourgatte explain that 80% of the students watch videos for their studies, whether for complementary studies or under teachers’ recommendations.

The main characteristic of educational videos is to be short, about 2 to 5 minutes, in order to keep the attention of the learners. This is also a format we’re used to, generally speaking, as it tends to be the norm on social networks.

The “home-made” format can be appreciated by the viewers from time to time, but we are mainly used to watching quality videos. Those call for a technical know-how to produce, hence the presence of the audio-visual team in video creation projects for educational purposes. The teachers prepare the content and the audio-visual team ensure the final visual quality.

#### 2.1.2 MOOCs

I’m going to use the explanation of the acronym “MOOC” given by Mangenot:

- Massive: for an unlimited number of inscriptions,
- Open: free, without any prerequisite knowledge,
- Online: an online course,
- Courses: in the academic meaning of the word, with a specific theme, precise learning objectives, a beginning and an end. And of course a chronological sequence of events.

	Launch	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	End
Module 1								
Module 2								
Module 3								
Module 4								
Module 5								
Module 6								

Figure 1. Chronological availability of each module in Mooc2Move

The way the content is presented every week varies, but it’s always made out of the same elements: videos, self-correcting quizzes, peer-reviewed evaluation processes, and ways to discuss between peers on social network pages, forums or others. The educational videos are particularly important here as they are the main way to transfer information.

#### 2.1.3 Educational Technologist and self-paced online learning

The first question we must ask is: what is an Educational Technologist? We can answer using a quote from Bilières (2017) who explains that the primary mission of the educational technologist is to create and produce teaching units linked to the development of Internet, online education, video. They should also assist the teaching staff.

The Educational Technologist has to take into account the final user of the courses they develop. The learners are the key factor and four conditions have been found to ensure their motivation: “attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction” (De Boer, Du Toit, Scheepers & Bothma, 2013).

Attention is necessary for learning and hard to keep. Offering varied contents and encouraging participation are ways to grab it. The relevance factor can be achieved by leading the learners to associate past learning experiences and the use in real life of the knowledge acquired during the course. As for confidence, it is accentuated when you find a way to show progress. And finally, teachers can contribute to the satisfaction in giving enough time to practice the just acquired knowledge, and in offering feedback at the right time, in a constructive way in order not to lead to a counterproductive deterrent.

These elements are particularly true in developing self-paced courses in which the teachers won't be able to change their content the way they would for in-person lessons. They usually would do it depending on the needs and lack of understanding expressed by the learners, but here the content is entirely planned and prepared beforehand: issues that might occur need to be addressed before the learners even get to the content. Motivation in particular needs to be maintained in MOOCs as several studies show that participation drops over time. This issue is attempted to be addressed through various researches, such as an article by Coulombe, Paquette & Mezghani on how to get better participation to a MOOC.

## 2.2 Videos in Mooc2Move

In Mooc2Move, we developed 3 types of videos.

For pre-existing videos, we had to obtain the right to use them, which was a tenuous process, but is not relevant in this study. Then, there were videos captured “live” in order to collect these people's advice and feedback, they were interviews of various people about their academic experience (teachers, staff and students) as well as presentations to a jury. Finally, videos I would call “acted”: their content was carefully scripted and the Mooc2Move team are the ones shown, and/or heard, in them. The creation process of the last two kinds of videos is quite different.

### 2.2.1 Live videos

A distinction needs to be made between the interviews and the presentations.

For the people sharing their experience, the whole team first came together to create an interview guideline so as to ask everyone some questions about different aspects that are explored in the MOOC. This was done so as to not have to ask the people to come back several times nor have to find others to interview. We filmed each person only once, each interview being about 20 minutes long.

The second step is common to interviews and the presentations: we filmed them by following a specific guideline created for the project.

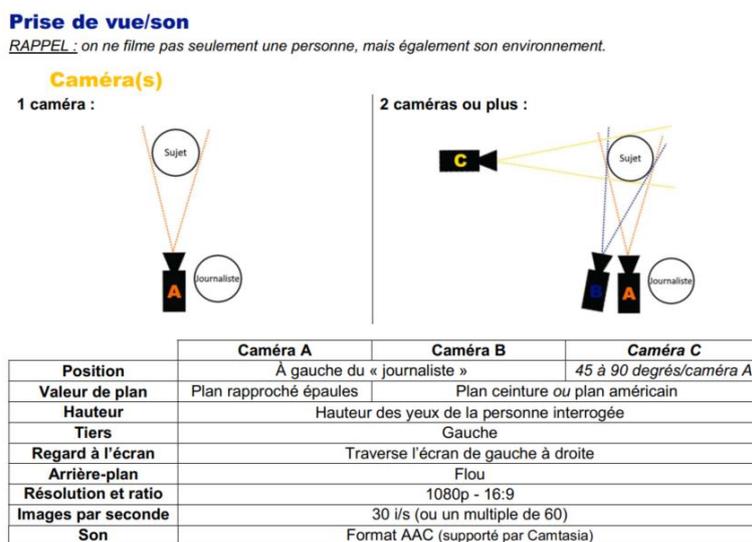


Figure 2. Guideline for filming the live videos

The teachers working on Mooc2Move then took on the long process of watching, transcribing and selecting snippets of the videos. The final product was then edited by the audio-visual team. As that team wasn't part of the project when we filmed the live videos, I'm the one who “manned” the camera at that point.

Below is a graphic representation of the process:

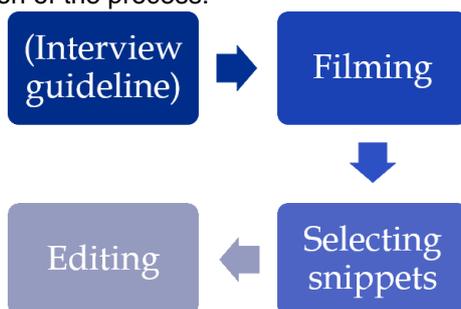


Figure 3. Live videos creation process

### 2.2.2 Acted videos

I previously talked about the learners’ motivation. It was one of our key concerns when interacting with each other on creating the acted videos for Mooc2Move. We first storyboarded them before getting the help of the audio-visual team for filming and editing.

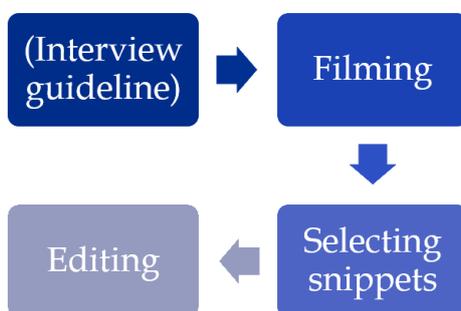


Figure 4. Acted videos creation process

The teachers each filled the storyboard for the videos they were in charge of: they wrote the full script and gave indications for illustrations when they had specific ideas.

*Mooc2Move*

Code vidéo : S . . . . .

Type de vidéo :  
Vidéo explicative / Capture d’écran / Animation

Auteur :

Version :

Plan	Texte oralisé (~130 mots/minute)	Illustrations	Temps
		Décrire ou dessiner le contenu à l’écran : mots-clés, image, extrait de film, graphique, etc.	

Figure 5. Blank Storyboard

This document was sent to me for proofreading and I reviewed it asking myself the following questions:

- Is the final length of the video below 6 minutes?
- Was the text written as it would sound when spoken?
- Will the vocabulary and sentence structure be understood by the target audience?
- Is the spoken information enough by itself or does it need some visuals?

The learner is the main focus of these thoughts. With the first two questions, I’m trying to keep their attention, and with the others I’m exploring the relevance. All of which is done in order to ensure their satisfaction.

I wrote comments and feedback everywhere it was needed and sent the document back to the teachers. This process was repeated several times for each storyboard before it was approved and sent to the audio-visual team to prep it for filming, as we used teleprompters.

This doesn't mean I only interacted with the audio-visual team while they were filming and editing. During the proofreading phase, we talked about the illustrations that the teachers were thinking about and whether they were possible, and we brainstormed about other possible illustrations. Right before filming, we checked the team had all the information they needed to do their job without needing to ask the teachers for too many cues.

In short, the communication with the audio-visual team was mainly about illustrations of the content, which can be considered as ways to ensure both relevance and attention.

## 2.3 Methodology

First of all, comparing my position in Mooc2Move to the position of Educational Technologists on other projects seemed necessary. I interviewed a member of the audio-visual team (hereafter referred to as “A”) as well as an educational technologist (hereafter referred to as “B”), both working on other projects at the *Université Grenoble Alpes*. These interviews were based on a series of questions in order for them to give me their opinion on both their work on the videos and the way they see everyone's position when creating an online course for which educational audio-visual creation is required.

The teachers working on Mooc2Move also answered my questions via an anonymous online form. I asked a series of questions pertaining to the position of each actor of the video creation process: teacher, educational technologist and audio-visual team. As the data was anonymous, the teachers have been given numbers from 1 to 4 in the analysis of the results.

All of this data has been analysed and compared to my own experience on this project. Please keep in mind that the answers were given to me in French, everything has been translated for the purpose of this publication.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Teachers' reflection on the position of the educational technologist

The answers from the teachers can be organised as three profiles.

#### 3.1.1 Coordination

Teacher 1 offers a very clear view of each actor's position. The teacher should 'write the content and create the exercises' while the educational technologist is the “link between technology and learning”. Here, the production is taken care of by the audio-visual team: filming, editing and helping in the choice of illustrations. Which can be represented as follows:



Figure 6. Position of the actors in creating videos –  
Teacher 1: pyramid structure

The teacher is in charge of the content as well as of the creation of self-correcting self-sufficient exercises (Mangenot & Louveau, 2006), while the audio-visual team creates quality visuals in order to keep the learner's attention (Pomerol, Epelboin & Thoury, 2014) and helps the learning process such as information transfer (Peraya, 2017). This teacher sees the educational technologist as a link between learning and technology, but the coordination dimension brings the position closer to the project manager: especially in the day-to-day monitoring to ensure the smooth conduct of the project (Pomerol, Epelboin & Thoury, 2014).

#### 3.1.2 Link between learning and technology

The second teacher's vision is rather close to the first one, but with more of a collaborative approach. Here, the teacher is still in charge of the content and the cohesion of the full course, but the educational technologist and audio-visual team have different roles.

The coordination dimension is taken from the educational technologist to centre mainly on the link between learning and technology in order to “raise the teachers' awareness to the link between content and visual, to the specifics of video making, and to give them suggestions as well as ideas pertaining to the storyboards”. In this case, the educational technologist has skills in language learning as well as in

technological tools. As for the audio-visual team, they are the video professionals and should “help the teachers with the technical aspects”.

All the actors communicate with one another and their position can be represented as follows:

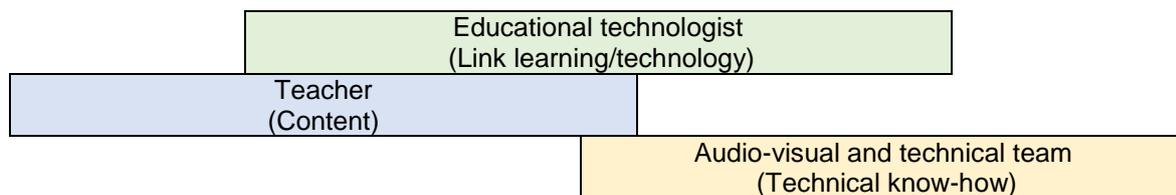


Figure 7. Position of the actors in creating videos – Teacher 2: collaborative structure

### 3.1.3 Theory vs. practical aspects

Teachers 3 and 4 have a similar way of seeing the video creation process. It can be represented as such:

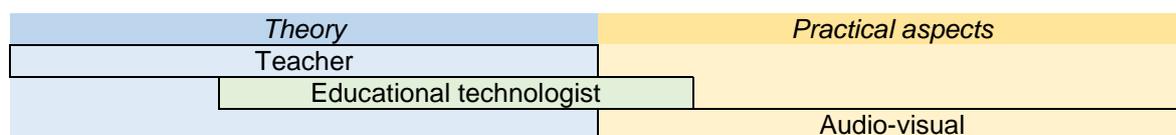


Figure 8. Position of the actors in creating videos – Teacher 3 and 4: theory/practical structure

The way they see it, the teacher is in charge of the “first idea” (teacher 3) and they explain how to use the video in the course (teacher 4). This vision is quite close to the description by Pomerol, Epelboin & Thoury (2014) of the way the teachers “decide the course’s objectives and progress”. In this case, the teachers keep their distance with the video and are more focused on the content that could exist in a completely different format.

The educational technologist’s goal seems to be helping the teachers: “proofreading of teaching content skills” (teacher 4) and “advise” (teacher 3). Teacher 4 also adds foreseeing the technical issues that might happen when they talk about “audio-visual skills linked to creating videos”. Thus, this way of considering the position of the educational technologist is close to the description by Bilières (2017) that we have already seen earlier: the primary mission of the educational technologist is to create teaching units linked to the development of technology.

Finally, the position of the audio-visual team is close to what we have seen with teacher 1: the goal is to create quality videos. Teacher 4 indicates that the audio-visual team has the skills to make the final product better as they should “offer suggestions to make the visual better”. Once again, this is the visual quality described by Pomerol, Epelboin & Thoury (2014) as an important factor of motivation.

Even among a team of teachers working on the same project, with the same educational technologist, it’s interesting to see that everyone does not share the exact same vision of the actors’ roles and positions when it comes to creating videos.

## 3.2 Educational technologist and audio-visual team’s vision

A and B have a similar view about the position of each actor in a project where the creation of videos for educational purposes is needed, whether for MOOCs or other types of courses.

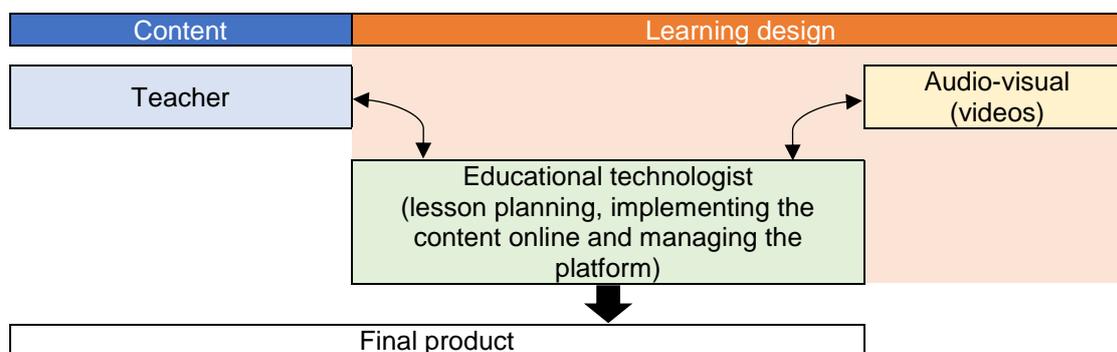


Figure 9. Position of the actors in creating videos – A and B: projects with videos for educational purposes

According to them, teachers are in control of the content, but the educational technologist reformats the content while scripting the course as they are the one in charge of the final product.

They translate the content created by the teacher into a format appropriate to the media. The educational technologist also communicates with the audio-visual team for management purposes such as ensuring each step will be done in time, as well as for the visual enhancement choices they can offer for the final product.

In the end, the educational technologist implements the content online, they make the final choices in terms of visual and user experience.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

The educational technologist isn't fully on the educational side. Creating these kinds of videos is part of the educational technologist's job but requires a specific set of skills. As for me, I can do most of what the audio-visual team did on the Mooc2Move project, but it would take me at least three times longer. This knowledge still allows me to foresee some of the technical requirements and problems that may arise, and to advise the teachers so they can make educated choices.

After I left MOOC2MOVE, I kept working on another similar project, ENVOL (Étudiants Nouveaux Venus Objectif Langue) which has almost the same French for academic purposes objectives, where I'm in charge of the work I couldn't complete with Mooc2Move: I implement the content created by the teacher on the online platform. Therefore, I have an overview of what the project is like at all times and I do not fully agree with the work division we have seen so far.

I believe the educational technologist's work is better represented as a mix of several representations we saw previously.

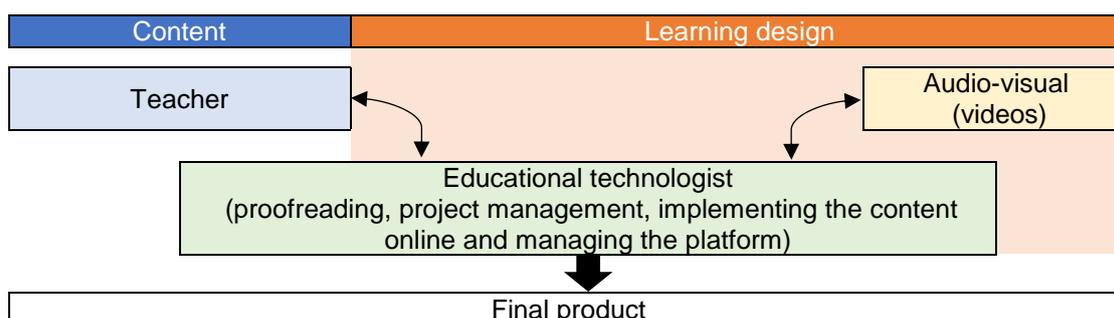


Figure 10 Position of the actors in creating videos – Educational technologist point of view

The educational technologist interacts with the teachers about the content of both the videos and the activities while considering the same possible issues for both. They also use their audio-visual knowledge to discuss with the audio-visual team. Generally speaking, the educational technologist exchanges with all the other actors of the project and is often the one who knows best about the timeline and due dates.

In such a project, the educational technologist should have knowledge about various subjects. First of all, they should have learned about education science in order to have a better overview of the course progression and the learners' experience. Information and communication technologies for learning purposes are of crucial importance in order to give advice to decision-makers and creators about the tools needed for the project. Many educational technologists work on fields they know nothing about. I still think knowledge on the subject helps in supporting the teachers, especially for language courses where you need to adapt the content to the language proficiency of the learners. And last but not least, having some knowledge of the audio-visual process makes the discussion with that part of the creation team much easier and puts the teachers on the right track from the start.

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