‘open case for review’ indicates a few things....
- firstly, the talk is about a particular case – a subject where I help students learn to review academic literature
- it’s also about how I opened part of this subject up in the world of open online learning, by turning it into a MOOC
- and thirdly, the teaching is itself also open to critical review and discussion, so I welcome any questions or comments you may have

But this is a case of technology-enhanced, blended learning, not hybrid pedagogy... I am not, at this stage, beaming remote students into the classroom at UOW via video or audio links.... for now, I am simply incorporating a MOOC into a campus-based class, so that both the UOW and remote global cohorts are online at the same time, and I interact with both groups simultaneously... And there are two assignments that both cohorts do at the same time, and they post to the same spaces, so they can learn from each other... but the assignments only involve sharing files – text and pre-recorded voice.... they are not live and dynamic in the sense that a truly hybrid pedagogy would be, and the remote students remain fully online, not participants in the UOW classroom... So for how, I am exploring how web-based and classroom lessons can complement and enhance each other, to get the best of both worlds into the UOW students’ experience. In future runs of the MOOC, I will experiment with a more genuine hybrid teaching and learning, by bringing some elements of the live classroom experience into the MOOC too, via a live, weekly video conference that will involve two different cohorts.
So I’ll give a snapshot of the subject, and explain the pedagogy, and how it relies on technology...

It’s a subject that pays very close attention to the academic writing of research students.

These students have to write the longest and most complex texts, but many struggle with the specific types of writing required, and need to be taught how to write about academic literature, and research methods and results and other aspects of a thesis.

To help them quite quickly understand and master the first challenge, the literature review, I apply a particular pedagogy and use various digital technologies to both tell students what to do and also show them how
Students

POSTGRADUATE
at UOW, most international students are in PG programs

RESEARCH
most PhD students are international

L2
when English isn’t their first language, the demands of reading & writing for a degree here pose a big challenge

ENGLISH LANGUAGE
most need intensive focus on language at every level—text organisation, argumentation, grammar and lexis

LITERATURE REVIEW
a common need for instruction

Students coming into this subject are newly arrived in Australia, and not yet used to using English for very complex, extensive academic writing, and high stakes assessment of their knowledge

UOW has a very high proportion of students whose first language is not English, and most of those are in postgraduate programs

In some faculties most or all research students are using English as their L2

They need intensive attention to their language development if they are to have a fair chance of coping with the reading and writing that they have to do to contextualise, justify and report their research effectively

The one thing they all have in common, whatever discipline they study, is the need to write a decent literature review, so this subject focuses on that
This subject is part of several courses across campus, and aims to meet the needs of research students, and help faculties implement our policy on developing effective language communication. This policy aims to ensure that in all courses, students have proper opportunities to develop their ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in the academic context. This subject gives research students the chance to discuss and develop key aspects of literacy that they need in order to write about their research effectively.
PEDAGOGY
GENRE - BASED

Now I’ll talk a bit about the particular literacy pedagogy being used in this subject...
A particular pedagogy focusing on ‘genre’ has been developed and tested over the past few decades within the SFL theoretical framework. It is a method, or curriculum cycle, that has mainly been used in schools in Australia, where the texts students have to write are relatively short, using just an overhead projector. Basically, before students are expected to write anything independently, they’re first shown many examples of the type of writing expected, and there is open discussion of its purpose, structure and language features. Then, a good example is carefully deconstructed, and more features pointed out. Then the class works together to construct a new example of the genre, or part of it, with the teacher acting as guide...

Depending on the type of communication, and the level of education, the class might co-construct a whole text, or an outline, or a paragraph, or just a few sentences at different stages of the text development process... The teacher elicits ideas, various suggestions are offered, options are discussed, alternatives explored... and decisions are made together.... The whole class, or small groups of students, negotiate the wording. This process exposes students to a wide range of possibilities for organising and wording the text, and engages them in critical comparison, thinking about what is possible and what is most suitable in the given context. Final decisions are made in a way that makes the reasoning and evaluation open and clear to everyone.

Only at the end of this process are students asked to create their own example of the genre independently.

And when they’re writing independently, they can always refer to the group for feedback and advice on their attempts, at any stage of their work-in-progress.

Decades of practice and research have proven this to be a very effective way to develop the linguistic range and proficiency of a whole class. The modelling is important, but the key is the joint construction phase. Bits of this thinking and practice have found their way into higher education – but rarely if ever the joint construction phase... This is a big and important gap to fill, as it’s particularly helpful for those learning through a second language.
The subject I’m teaching goes all the way with this pedagogy. It’s designed for students who are in many ways the most linguistically vulnerable in the university, and most desperately in need of help with their writing.

You might think PhD students would be on top of academic writing... but many are accepted with lower proficiency in English than undergraduates – even though the linguistic demands on them are much greater. They’re accepted on the basis of their research potential, and often face excruciating challenges in trying to cope with the amount of reading and writing involved in conceptualizing and justifying their research plans.

So this subject is designed around the one genre that they all need to master quickly – that is, the kind of literature review that contextualises and justifies a new research project. And it gives the attention to detail that their writing needs.

The big challenge for this subject is the length and complexity of the literature review genre... So I break the writing process down into distinct steps.... And for each of these step, we follow the basic curriculum cycle I just outlined – first modelling, then analysing an example, then creating one together, and only then expecting students to do their own writing independently

In this staged process, we pay attention to both the overall purpose and structure of the genre and its elements, and to the more micro level patterns of language that characterise it
This genre-based pedagogy is clearly effective for language development in many contexts, and makes an enormous difference to those doing a particular writing task for the first time.

The careful demonstration, discussion and peer review of process develops students’ insight and confidence pretty quickly.

But it’s hard to imagine using this approach in teaching very complex genres, and paying close attention to multiple language patterns, if all you have is pen, paper or projectors...
But I’ve found it is very possible to teach this complex genre in this way with the help of several other technologies – and it’s also great fun, and very effective.

By carefully blending classroom and online practices, we can put dramatically more variety and critical discussion into any classroom experience.... and it’s exactly this that most helps students develop their linguistic repertoire, fluency and confidence quickly.

Some parts of this pedagogy can be done through the Moodle site and with students own devices. We can show students many examples of the genre very easily and quickly online, and through links to the library and discussion forums, they can immediately find and share more examples that are relevant to their own discipline.

Taking a shared example and using a class projector, everyone can see the deconstruction process and join in the discussion. Through activity resources within Moodle, such as the wiki, we can deconstruct and discuss text examples together, and I can also demonstrate the whole process of doing a literature review, step by step, and engage students in collaborative writing each step along the way.

And, through their own pages in the wiki or an individual blog, students can engage in the process of constructing their own text, step by step, sharing their work-in-progress, and getting feedback and peer review.
After teaching this way for several semesters within Moodle, I then decided to open part of it up to a much larger audience... This MOOC began in response to a threat – the campus subject was being positioned into many courses all at once, and the numbers enrolling could have gone up suddenly and too much, changing the workshop-style of the class... So I figured a fully online version would be good to have, so I can put a quota on the classroom version, and still offer something useful to others meanwhile, and also revision material... and in fact just use the MOOC material within the regular class too...

I also want to make sure students know about open education, and the huge potential of collaborative online spaces for peer learning and personal development of writing fluency. Most students still don't actually know about MOOCs, so they’re surprised to learn there are over 11K open courses online, from over 900 universities... and over 100 million people enrolled in them last year, around the world... Coursera has 37 million learners, EdX has 18 million, XuetangX has 14 million and Udacity has 10 million. FutureLearn is the 5th largest, with nearly nine million students. These numbers don’t mean that much when only a small percentage actually finish courses, but the scale of enrolments still gives a certain gravitas to the courses, and those doing this one seem to like their course having that kind of street cred...

MOOCs are often criticised for not being very interactive, but I found a way to design this one the way I want... I use a Wordpress blog linked to the course to demonstrate the text development process, just the same way I was doing it through a wiki in Moodle. And the open course is a useful testing ground for the curriculum and pedagogy, as it gives me feedback from a much wider audience than I’m used to from small groups on campus. 10K enrolled in the first run of this one, and the level of interaction was great, and the feedback very helpful as I continue to consider the design of my subject and how well it’s meeting the needs it identifies... Mostly though I’m interested in the potential to integrate this online version of part of my subject into further courses across campus – as a resource that anyone can use, and to engage more people in discussion of this kind of academic writing. I think MOOCs are particularly powerful when they function within campus-based courses, not just as alternatives or marginal adjuncts to regular programs and systems. That’s my thinking about all the resources I develop... This online course works as a good awareness raiser and point of discussion in any course that requires some research – it’s not intended as a training program so much as an open exploration and discussion of needs and options.
The MOOC has a few other spaces connected to it, as well as the blog I run to demonstrate the writing development process...

Again, the use of social media in and around the MOOC and the classroom-based course is not exactly hybrid pedagogy, but it’s the first steps in that direction.

To keep discussion going about any of the topics or strategies of the course, there is:

• a Twitter hashtag.... I like to use that just to show students coming into this subject how to use social media for academic purposes.... which is generally a novel idea to them

and.....
Social media

**#FLLitReview**
demonstrating use of twitter for academic purposes

**FaceBook group**
motivating, quickly shares info relevant to research

**Bloggosphere**
students blog work-in-progress, link up via class blog, creating ongoing community

- a Facebook group... this helps us quickly share links to anything we find online that might be of interest to others in the course... I use the topic of plastics pollution in the oceans to demonstrate the literature reviewing process, so I share things related to that, and students contribute things they find to help me develop my writing on that topic, and I also share anything I find on their topics... this practice quickly builds a genuinely sharing and caring online community

- I also encourage students to create their own blog to develop their writing fluency and style
- and I also introduce them to various other networking tools... like ResearchGate, Academia, etc
- they also find it good to know that web-based bibliographic software (like Zotero and Mendeley) have morphed into quasi social media spaces....
There is an enormous amount of feedback on this subject from classroom and online versions, and I’m in the process of analyzing it all, but here are a few randomly selected comments from UOW students...
What do students think?

"the mix between online and class interaction was an interesting experience. Group discussions in class kept me engaged.... online instruction provided documented useful feedback that can be referred to at any time during the semester”.

“the wiki page was very convenient to see and compare my writing with other students. I was able to assess my level and how to improve my academic writing”

“having the opportunity to look at other students work provided rich material to learn others way of writing and mistakes”

“Attending the class weekly helped me connect with other students. It increased my communication skills and decreased my sense of isolation. I really enjoyed and valued attending those classes”.

"it was a good educative experience, and I made many new friends. Experts are not developed overnight but with constant and persistent practice, I will keep improving on what I have learned”.
“one cannot do meaningful research without a convincing literature review. This course explained the reason for the lit review, and how to go about drafting a good one. I now see it as the very foundation of any research.... I am now able to group my literature in a much more efficient way”

“This course helped me develop questions, claims and arguments that help me draft my literature review. I can now write each sentence so it connects to the purpose of the paragraph, and to the developing text and its logic....and can connect each question and claim to specific references”

“The most important thing I learned is that I need to select the most relevant resources for my writing, instead of including all of them... my literature review is now much more critical”

“most difficult for me is to outline my literature review, to arrange ideas.... from this course I’ve improved my writing, step by step”

“The weekly feedback on writing was extremely beneficial... a great way to receive constant regular comments that can be acted on immediately, and shape future writing...
The subject is designed to enact several dimensions of the Model we’re using at UOW to frame curriculum development priorities and projects

- hybrid learning, incorporating a rich range of digital technologies and redesigning the learner’s experience to essentially have the best of both classroom and digital worlds
- focus on the experience of students in their first year here (FYE doesn’t only refer to undergraduates - international students coming into post-graduate coursework and research programs are in Australia for the first time, and also often doing academic work in English for the first time)
- engaging connections across disciplines and professions (the subject connects students from many different disciplines)
- curriculum-integration of language development (the less visible dimension of the curriculum model is the role of language in learning, and the need to pay attention to the linguistic medium through which we teach and learn)

As a language educator, my main point here is that any curriculum needs to include many and various opportunities for students to develop their ability to communicate effectively, and master specific forms of written communication, because these are fundamental to learning and the assessment of learning

Whatever others’ view of ‘hybrid learning’ may be, I am interpreting it as more than blended learning, or technology-enhanced learning – these terms seem to be about the combination of online and in class per se.... Hybrid learning and teaching seems more about getting the balance just right for a particular pedagogical purpose, and potentially bringing online and on campus cohorts into a meaningful, mutually beneficial interaction of some kind... So I see myself on a trajectory or cline of experimentation really, as I seek to get the mix just right for my students, to meet their language development needs
There’s a lot of talk about Industry 4.0 (the idea that digital technologies have brought us into a 4th industrial revolution) and talk about Education 4.0 (the idea that practices in teaching and learning are dramatically influenced by digital technology, big data, robotics, AI etc, which are changing how products are designed and how services are delivered, and how live and communicate)... I find that all very interesting but also hyped up...

Of course technological changes lead to workplace changes, and education changes too, to prepare the next generation to function in new kinds of workplaces... but higher education has always been about mastering whatever technology is current, and thinking critically, and solving problems and being creative... and communicating effectively in whatever forms and contexts are needed in professional life.... What is new though is the potential to ‘upscale’ good approaches to teaching and learning and to share them widely and quickly... This case shows how one subject uses a range of technologies to get students working together, sharing, asking and responding to open questions, solving problems together... and how technologies enable the instructor to more easily monitor, answer questions, guide, intervene, support... The digital technologies don’t disrupt my usual practice in language and literacy education, but do significantly enhance what I do. They speed things up and enable a far more multimodal flavour to what we’re doing.

The key to effective use of educational technology and the shift from blended to hybrid learning is the focus on pedagogy needed in a given situation. First know what kind of interactions you want to see going on, then design the learning environment and use technologies to achieve the clear pedagogical aim... Putting some of my subject online and in the open doesn’t mean everyone looking at it will suddenly be able to write a great literature review, but it does open up the conversation and get many more people started on the right path at least. The MOOC is a great entry point to the topic, and the multimodal dimension appeals to many leaners.... So it’s a great resource to include in many courses. It makes a nice bridge between online and classroom experiences. But it’s the learning design that matters most, so that’s what should be the main focus. I use the MOOC as a resource within a carefully designed and monitored learning experience on campus, not a substitute for classroom education. In thinking about where this subject came from, the needs it aims to meet, how it has changed over time, and where it is going, I think the term ‘hybrid learning’ works, when that is understood to mean not just the use of sophisticated, multimodal resources within the subject, but the aim to get the balance right between online and in class experiences. By providing so much instruction online in this case, I can make the classroom a places of highly engaged critical discussion, where language develops naturally and quickly – which is my main aim in teaching this subject
Relevant reading...


Christie F 2013 Genres and Genre Theory: A response to Michael Rosen, Changing English vol. 20 no. 1 pp 11-22


