Outline

• Why we’re doing this: what was the genesis of the MOOC, what are its objectives?
• Who is doing this, who’s publishing it, when it’s happening, and who is it aimed at?
• A brief overview of the course content
• Methodology: how MOOCs are different from other forms of teaching and learning
• What we have learned in producing the MOOC, and how we see things developing
Why a dictionary MOOC?

• The first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) about dictionaries and dictionary-making
• A topic about which non-experts often have strong opinions but little real knowledge
• Challenge common misconceptions about dictionaries (normative vs descriptive)
• Promote knowledge of the information-types dictionaries contain and their evidence base
• Raise awareness of the latest trends in lexicographic research, the roles of language technology, corpora and crowdsourcing, insights into the lexicographic process
Course developers

- **Sharon Creese**, Coventry University: formerly a journalist, then Editor at Macmillan Dictionaries; teaches at Coventry, recent PhD in dictionaries, new words, and the media
- **Barbara McGillivray**, research fellow at The Alan Turing Institute and University of Cambridge, formerly language technologist at Oxford Dictionaries. Research in semantic change detection
- **Hilary Nesi**, Professor in English Language at Coventry University. Research on corpus development and analysis, English for academic purposes, design and use of dictionaries and reference tools for academic contexts
- **Michael Rundell**: lexicographer since 1980, currently Editor-in-Chief of [macmillandictionary.com](http://macmillandictionary.com) and Chief Lexicographic Officer of Lexical Computing Ltd
- **Katalin Süle**, Dictionary Publisher at Macmillan Education, has worked on Macmillan Dictionaries since 2000
Partners

• Coventry University Online
  • the digital arm of Coventry University, developing a range of online MA, MBA etc programmes

• FutureLearn
  • a private company owned by the Open University
  • offers a huge range of courses in partnership with dozens of universities worldwide
  • leverages maximum participation
Audience and launch date

- Provides an introduction to the world of dictionaries to a broad, non-technical audience: language teachers, students, and interested laypeople
- Proposed launch date: late 2018, repeated next year
Objectives

• *Not* a training course in lexicography
• Rather, an introduction to the world of dictionaries and corpora
• Not tied to the products of one specific publisher
• A different learning experience, adaptable to the learners’ own dictionary-using habits
• Gather insights from participants’ comments and responses - potentially valuable research data
FutureLearn’s approach to teaching

• Based on the view that all human learning involves interaction
• Teacher input is restricted and opportunities for peer-to-peer conversation are maximized
• Provocative, “bite-sized” materials, learners are expected to post their own responses and comments
• Short video and audio recordings and articles
• Further reading activities are heavily guided
FutureLearn terminology

- **Weeks**: “personally meaningful study periods” (Sharples, 2017)
- Each Week starts with a **Big question**, designed to stimulate participants’ interest
- Each Week is broken up into **Activities**
- Each Activity has several **Steps**: initial discussion, reading/writing, followed by discussion and reflection, final round-up Step
- This MOOC consists of six Weeks, each Week consisting of around 20 Steps
Course actors and pace

- **Participants** work at their own pace and can access any part of the course at any point.
- **Moderators** see to the day-to-day management of the contributions.
- **Interviewees**: experts give short interviews with course educators.
- **Course educators** may also contribute summary postings at key points in the course.
- The learning environment changes constantly as more and more contributions are submitted.
A couple of videos

• When and why have you used a dictionary? Video 1
• Introspection: how many meanings does party have? Video 2
Brief outline

- **Week 1** Introduction: Why use dictionaries when you can use search engines?
  - includes a poll to gauge users’ attitudes at start of course, repeated in final Week
  - sections on dictionary use-cases, the dictionary as a cultural artefact
- **Week 2** What’s in a dictionary
  - the range of information-types in both traditional and digital dictionaries
  - contexts of dictionary use
• **Week 3 Evidence**: where does the information in dictionaries come from?
  • pre-corpus evidence (citations etc)
  • an introduction to corpora and corpus-querying software
  • the relationship between dictionaries and language data

• **Week 4** What goes in a dictionary, and who decides?
  • issues of inclusion and coverage
  • notion of dictionary as “gatekeeper”
  • differences between traditional and user-generated material
• **Week 5 Meanings and definitions**
  • how meanings are created - the relevance of context
  • why some words have more than one meaning
  • how to explain meanings

• **Week 6: what does the future hold?**
  • emerging trends and technologies
  • automating lexicographic processes, such as neologism detection
  • role of user-generated content
  • closing poll and summary of the course
What we have learned

MOOCs: a very different model for teaching and learning

• more collaborative, more task-based
• pace and variety of teaching styles, short bite-sized “Steps”
• conveying complex ideas in non-academic mode: e.g. “articles” are typically 1-2 pages
• maintaining participant interest and engagement
• covering the essential features of the field in six Weeks
Future prospects

- A more advanced version? It depends on user feedback and perseverance
- Course data as a source of research material
- Possibility of creating a community of active users and potential contributors
- Very much an experiment at this stage