



# Using MOOCs to develop community discussion around death and dying

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Lauren Miller-Lewis, Deb Parker  
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There would be no Dying2Learn  
without the Dying2Learn  
facilitators



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## Paradoxes about death and dying

- Death is universal but framed within personal and familial contexts and influenced by changing cultural and societal systems
- Death as a medical event but also as the natural conclusion to every life
- Living longer with greater access to information but still surprised by death
- Desire to die at home but many of us die in hospitals
- Included in CareSearch 2015-2017 funding proposal:

*Development of a MOOC on death, dying and palliative care in Australia to build community awareness of palliative care and death as a normal process*

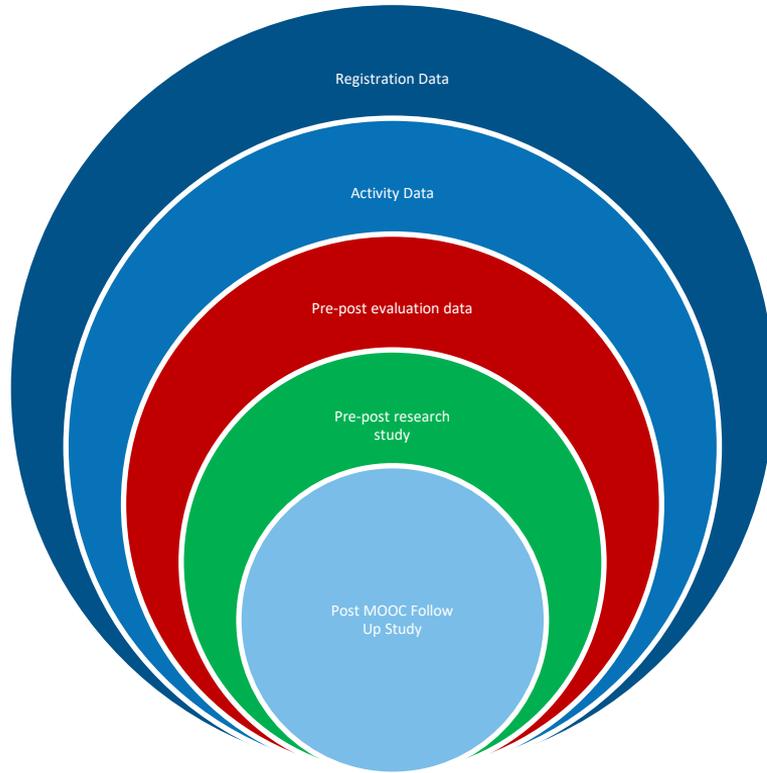
Week 1: How we engage with death and dying

Week 2: Representations of Death and Dying

Week 3: If Death is the Problem... Is Medicine the Answer?

Week 4: Digital Dying

- MOOC = Massive Open Online Course
- Lens on death and dying (i.e. not a palliative care education)
- Intent to engage with general public and community broadly
- Organic development and constructive
- Commitment to evaluation and research
  - Operational: Being comfortable talking about death and dying
  - Death Competence measure: Coping with Death Scale (30 item self-report)
  - Data: Course metrics, enrolment data, formal scales and qualitative analyses



Participants advised at enrolment about registration & evaluation data

Formal ethics for the inclusion of a pre-post research study

Ethics amendments for:  
-analysis of activity data  
-follow up study at 6 months  
-additional or replacement scales in 2017, 2018 & 2020

SBREC 7247 Flinders University

Key Findings	2016 N= 1,156		2017 N=1960		2018 N=1602		Cumulative N=4,718	
Gender (Female)	92.6%		92.3%		91.8%		92.2%	
Age M(SD) range	49.5 (12.3) 16-84yrs		47.2 (12.3) 17-82yrs		47.7 (12.8) 18-90yrs		47.9 (12.5) 16-90yrs	
Attitude Statements <sup>1</sup>	Pre M(SD)	Post M(SD)	Pre M(SD)	Post M(SD)	Pre M(SD)	Post M(SD)	Pre M(SD)	Post M(SD)
Death is a normal part of life	4.60 (0.93)	4.85 (0.40)	4.61 (0.88)	4.89 (0.32)	4.56 (0.93)	4.84 (0.91)	4.59 (0.91)	4.86 (0.39)
I am comfortable talking about death and dying	4.25 (0.94)	4.53 (0.63)	4.32 (0.88)	4.55 (0.59)	4.23 (0.91)	4.51 (0.45)	4.27 (0.90)	4.53 (0.61)
Death competence <sup>2</sup>	N	M(SD)	N	M(SD)	N	M(SD)	N	M(SD)
Pre-MOOC death competence	277	155.0 (27.4)	534	155.6 (25.2)	374	153.6 (24.9)	1185	154.8 (25.6)
Post-MOOC death competence	148	165.3 (21.9)	204	164.6 (21.5)	177	162.4 (21.1)	529	164.1 (21.5)

1. Tieman J, Miller-Lewis L, et al contribution of a MOOC to community discussions around death and dying. BMC Palliat Care. 2018 Feb 20;17(1):31

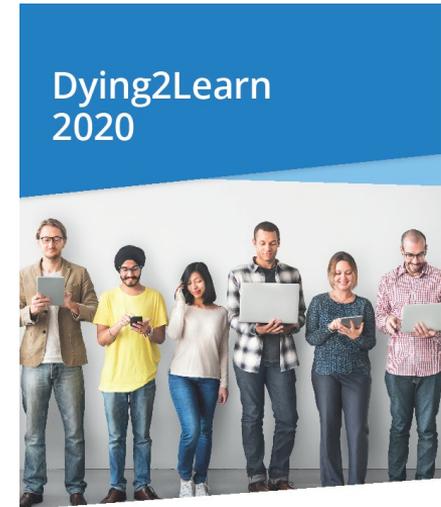
2. Miller-Lewis L, Tieman J et al C. Can Exposure to Online Conversations About Death and Dying Influence Death Competence? An Exploratory Study Within an Australian Massive Open Online Course. Omega (Westport). 2020 Jun;81(2):242-271.

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