

MOOCs:
***Disruptive Innovation or
 Flavor of the Month?***
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MOOC>



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MOOC Definition

- **M**assive
- **O**pen
- **O**nline
- **C**ourse



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MOOC: *Massive*

- Designed for large-scale participation by students world-wide



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MOOC: *Open*

- Anyone can participate
- Course content may come from open education resources (OER) that permit use by others (*e.g., NROC; Khan Academy; online, open source textbooks*)
- Aggregator/collector of others' content more than creator of own course content
- No cost to participants (*currently*)
- No regulations for course registration



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MOOC: *Online*

- Primarily experienced via the Internet
- Crowd-sourced student interaction
 - Real-time: chat rooms, virtual reality (*2nd Life*)
 - Delayed-time: threaded discussion boards, blog postings
- Instructor interaction varies (*e.g., poses questions for student discussion, participates in discussions*)
- Learning communities: responsibility of students to create their own



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MOOC: *Course*

- Curriculum: videos, readings, & problems
- Assessment (*multiple-choice quizzes & exams; posting comments to discussion boards or blogs; computer-graded assignments such as computer programs; peer review of papers; experimenting with computer-graded essays*)
- Recognition for participation
 - “Badge”, virtual certificate
 - College credit (*very limited so far*)
- Participation expectation
 - Self-paced
 - Follow expected calendar of events



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Why MOOCs So Hot?

- “**Disruptive innovation**” that may change education (*do not get left behind or out of the game*)
- It's the new kid on the block (maybe)
- Potential new revenue stream for colleges
- Provide access to college-level learning for all in society with little or no cost
- Reduce cost and time-to-graduation by accepting MOOC credits in lieu of courses
- Self-promotion of professors and colleges
- Might attract more paying students to colleges



Are MOOCs New? Not Really

- Pre 1920s, mail correspondence courses
- 1920s, broadcast radio courses
- 1940s, broadcast TV courses (*e.g., Sunrise Semester, PBS telecourses*)
- 1990, The Teaching Company (*700+ audio & video courses for purchase by respected professors*)
- 2007, iTunesU (*800 participating colleges with 1 billion lectures downloaded so far of thousands of courses*)
- 2011, Stanford University (*Three MOOC courses enrolling over 100,000 students in each*)
- MOOC Providers: Udacity, Courseara, edX



Who Participates in MOOCs?

- **Disengaged:** quit soon after start of the course, or even never view single video
- **Sampler:** watch videos occasional throughout the academic term
- **Auditor:** watches most of the videos but not the assignments
- **Completers:** (about 6 to 9% of registered students) view most videos and complete most assignments



Challenges for MOOCs

- No student services (academic support, advising, counseling, etc.)
- No exam proctoring
- Online not for everyone's preference (*requires digital fluency, self-regulated learner, independent study, and no need for human interaction with students or instructor*)
- Most students do not complete the MOOC
- No revenue model yet
- Colleges rushing to implement with little research on effective practices



Possible Future for MOOCs

- “**Freeium**” model, students pay to certify credentials (paid premium) but not process of acquisition (free)
- Modest fees for MOOC enrollment (*160,000 students x \$10 = \$1.6M for 3 month course, offer multiple times annually to generate more \$\$\$*)
- Accept MOOCs as transfer credits as with the current practice (*community colleges, dual-credit high school, military equivalency*)
- Accept MOOCs for introductory courses only, subsequent courses traditional tuition
- Total failure, administrators move on to next flavor of the month idea and hope no one notices



Suggestions for DE Educators

- Be open for experimentation (*carefully evaluate*)
- Advocate for academic support services for students and not just contracting out to commercial online tutoring company
- Consider setting up online tutoring service
- Be well informed of online college readiness courses (*NROC and the Gates-funded projects*)
- Read the MOOC literature (*e.g., periodically web search Chronicle of Higher Education web site*)
- Keep developing your digital fluency

