Making MOOCs Work – some thoughts

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Overview

• MOOC – some trends

• MOOC engagements in Singapore

• Issues and suggestions

• Concluding remarks
MOOC Trends

• MOOCs completion low, but a closer look at Asia
  o Over 70 open universities with large(st) adult learners & growing
  o Most popular providers: Udacity, Coursera, edX, Open2Study, FutureLearn, Rwaq, Iversity, FUN, and Edraak
  o MOOC developed at national level unlike Europe

• MOOCs used differently in developing world
  o Over 80% have only basic or intermediate level ICT skills
  o 30% completed a course
  o Women more likely to complete or obtain certification
  o Main motivations: gain specific job skills (61%), preparing for further education (39%), and obtaining professional certification (37%)
MOOC Trends

• 3 in 4 Asian & African learners use mobile devices to access MOOC courses – mobile infrastructure better than broadband?

• Most MOOCs users are educated learners with professional degrees & live in developed countries

• LDCs
  o Lack of infrastructure a key issue
  o Lack of research literature for MOOC usage
MOOC in Singapore

• Not taken off in big way:
  o Culture of life-long learning
  o MOOC courses viewed as ‘additional merits’ & non-essential

• Top universities offered courses, but small number.

• EU centre in Singapore offers EU courses through MOOC

• Main platforms: Coursera, Udacity & Udemy
MOOC in Singapore

- Skillsfuture – promotion of CET
  - Skillsfuture credits – >25 yrs, $500 with periodic top-ups, no expiry date.
  - Study awards – early to mid-career, skills development, $5k (500-2000)
  - Mid-career enhancement – >40 yrs, 90% of course fee
  - Earn & Learn – designed programmes for learning while working
    - Individual: Sign-on incentive $5k
    - Employer: grant up to $15k per employee
  - Skillsfuture credits can be used for selected MOOC courses
  - Some MOOC courses recognised in undergraduate programmes
MOOC in Singapore

• Institute of Adult Learning
  o Focus on raising capabilities of workers through CET
  o Partnership with Canvas & Udemy to build up & deliver MOOC offerings.

• Some findings:
  o Periodic consolidation of learning has high participation
  o Scaffolding of T&L interactions & assessments important
  o Participants need to be well prepared for collaborative activities
  o Clarity in facilitator roles & appropriateness of intervention in discussion forum important for learning
Issues – Pedagogies

• Massiveness & low teaching involvement

• High heterogeneity of MOOC learners; high variation in maturity, experience & cultural background

• Responsiveness to student feedback

• Lack of understanding in how students engage in MOOC

• Participation in discussion forum – better learning outcomes

• Failure to understand content and no one to turn to for help
Issues – Assessment

• Lack of assessment for/as learning, mainly assessment of learning

• Assessment options limited – mainly quizzes (single right answer)

• Authentication – Learning vs certification
Issues – Credentialling

• Survey by Chronicle of Higher Ed of professors running MOOC – 72% no to credit recognition.

• Less that 5% India & Singapore respondents strongly agree that MOOC certs are accepted in job market.

• No central body or standards against which accreditation & certification can be benchmarked.

• Broader – recognition of skills/knowledge acquired through work?
Suggestions

• Context
  o From many-to-one to many-to-many
  o MOOCs & credentialing calls into question what is a university degree?
    • Content, broadening & depth (of thinking)
  o Model: prepare, explore, specialise?

• Pedagogies & assessments
  o Individualised learning experience?
  o Adaptive learning system powered by AI engine, eg. Watson Computer?
  o Pedagogy need to fit with subject matter & desired outcomes of learning
  o Use strategies to increase participation, eg. ‘ask a question’
Suggestions

• Certification/Learning Ecology
  o Re-think a model for learners to acquire certification through work & learn – standards-based stacking of skills, knowledge & values?
  o Delivery – include community-based learning
  o Learning – include broadening & depth
Concluding Remarks

• Need stronger T&L interactions – MOOCs as ‘first’ step.

• Learning (online, face-to-face, blended etc) need significant reconceptualisation

• MOOC engagements may need to fit to national policies

• Advancement in AI may allow for adaptive learning system
  ○ Fundamentally shift the role of educators towards facilitation of learning
Concluding Remarks

• For possible next steps:
  o LDC – easier to focus on delivering through mobile devices
  o Build community of learners
  o Establish clear ‘value-proposition(s)’ for (different groups of) learners
  o Re-envision future of learning
  o More structures for selected courses? Synchronous face-to-face & remote?
Thank You!