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## Importance Of MOOCs in modern learning

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**Abstract:** *A massive open online course (MOOC /mu?k/) is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the Web. MOOCs provide interactive user forums that help build a community for students, professors and teaching assistants. MOOCs are the biggest upcoming trend in the current education scenario. It has offered opportunity to all individuals irrespective of his or her economic background and physical location to pursue his or her education. MOOC is undoubtedly a boon for students interested in various courses, however, there are certain challenges one must be aware of while pursuing massive open online courses. The major reason for these failures for all but the most self-reliant, online learning can be isolating. Disengaged students are more likely to perform poorly or drop out altogether. Some instructors mitigate this problem by recording more audio or video segments instead of only providing written lessons.*

**Key Words:** MOOC , community, teaching assistants, current education scenario, opportunity.

A massive open online course (MOOC /mu?k/) is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the Web.] In addition to traditional course materials, such as filmed lectures, readings, and problem sets, many MOOCs provide interactive courses with user forums or social media discussions to support community interactions among students, professors, and teaching assistants (TAs), as well as immediate feedback to quick quizzes and assignments. MOOCs are a widely researched development in distance education, first introduced in 2008,[3] that emerged as a popular mode of learning in 2012.

Early MOOCs (cMOOCs: Connectivist MOOCs) often emphasized open-access features, such as open licensing of content, structure and learning goals, to promote the reuse and remixing of resources. Some later MOOCs (xMOOCs: extended MOOCs) use closed licenses for their course materials while maintaining free access for students.

**Role Of MOOC in education-** Massive open online course (MOOC) is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access through the web. MOOCs provide interactive user forums that help build a community for students, professors and teaching assistants. MOOCs are the biggest upcoming trend in the current education scenario. It has offered opportunity to all individuals irrespective of his or her economic background and physical location to pursue his or her education. MOOC is undoubtedly a boon for students interested in various courses, however, there are certain challenges one must be aware of while pursuing massive open online courses. MOOCs offer the entire learning community equal rights to education. People can choose from the varied range of programs and enroll for the course of their choice from the convenience of their homes without spending a dime. Although students study independently in these courses, they at the same time collaborate with their peers from different parts of the world. MOOCs are boon for people who have faced obstacles in pursuing education due to lack of fund, no proper opportunities, un-accessible geographical location, etc. My observations from the experience of the learners motivated to take MOOCs was as a result of their inability to meet up with the financial aspect of higher education; their goal is to better understand whether and how MOOCs can be a pathway to employment for these populations. Through these activities, we will begin to understand the ways in which the MOOC experiences may affect employment or potential employment for students who are not properly well served by more traditional forms of higher education.

A massive open online course (MOOC) is a model for delivering learning contents online to any person



who wants to take any course, with no limit on attendance. Pedagogically, MOOCs are designed to be extremely interactive. It uses all the interactive media available on the internet to engage students. The various tools include blogs, videos, podcasts and forums that are embedded into the program seamlessly. These tools make learners collaborate and help them solve real world problems rather than discussing hypothetical material. Real discussion of ideas, theories and concepts are an integral part of a MOOC and are used for peer review and assessment. MOOCs do not just put institutions names into people's heads, they actively encourage the staff and students of that institution to interact with the wider public, and vice versa. Now you could argue the philosophy of a course and the lack of teacher-learner interaction in some courses. But generally speaking, they provide a chance for a learner to engage with other learners. This is generally considered a good-thing in educational terms, engagement leads to interaction which can lead to some good learning. MOOCs provide a chance for institutions to reach out to a wide audience, potentially a group who may never have the chance to link with it in any other form. Disadvantaged groups, or these located half-way around the world are offered a chance, even if thinly veiled, to connect with otherwise unavailable institution.

Some have speculated that MOOCs would help give individuals in the job market a boost.....someone taking a course and receiving a certificate from a course taught by a world-class professor might have an edge when looking for a job. Am not entirely convinced this would be the case, some type of a permanent standardized record of a course contents and official credentials for courses among different MOOC platforms would be needed for a MOOC to carry more weight with potential employers. MOOC have a potential here for not only helping incoming college students succeed, but giving a preview of a particular university's teaching style to potential applicants. More importantly, it could help high school teachers shift their time to core courses at their school and give them the opportunity to work with students as mentors and coaches in new innovative ways. It was a powerful reminder of the value of MOOCs of being able to experience a wide range of subjects with no negative consequences if you discover that actually you are not so fond of a subject and might discover that you really enjoy something unexpected. The obvious advantage of MOOC is their capacity to reach a nearly unlimited audience.

MOOCs enable people to easily learn any new topics (for instance, in-memory computing) whenever needed and to stay up to date during their entire career. The experiment showcases how MOOC principles can connect on-ground classes with distant resources and allow students to reach a wide audience with their work. MOOCs enable lifelong learners from around the globe to interact with one another on unprecedented scales. Since MOOCs are not bound by academic calendar, a semester or year of material could be broken into smaller units of a few weeks that students can take during summer breaks or other times that fit better with their overall schedule. Given that MOOCs are often criticized for their lack of student's engagement, peer assessment could be a breakthrough that could validate their mass scale. MOOCs explored unhesitatingly the potential, pitfalls, drawbacks, and advantage of massive open approaches to teaching and learning. The question is, what is different about this approach, and why is it worth watching even in its first commercial implementations? In this essay, I have explored the process they are testing and examining the potential for peer assessments to change how MOOCs are used. The study will provide a better understanding of the factors that affect quantitative and qualitative engagement with course materials and design and should identify potential measures to improve MOOC completion rates. This is the kind of learning to which MOOCs (or any course) should aspire: not to a poor mimicry of what we already do, but learning that is informed by the specific potential of the people working in the community.

MOOCs are a better means of improving the academic standard of a country because it is an effective way of getting out an important message or to raise awareness about certain topics. MOOCs provide an opportunity for a learner to acquire proficiency or participation certificates for a particular skill set or particular piece of knowledge. At a time when addressing skills development is a matter of priority in policy making, MOOCs can offer new



opportunities to address that concern involving much larger numbers of learners than is currently possible. Understanding the importance and indispensable aspects of MOOCs and giving due attention to its teaching and learning strategies can help us conquer those challenges common to traditional classrooms and MOOCs alike. Professional education will become more critical in the future, and MOOCs provides a great means.

#### Advantages Of MOOC

**1. Offer a variety of subjects-** College schedules are tight, so you might not be able to take every course that you want to. Your school may not even offer a subject that you're interested in. This is where MOOCs can help. Search on one of the MOOC providers' websites to find interesting classes. The subjects range from yoga to personal finance to engineering to IT to English composition, etc. In some instances, you can pay a fee to receive college credit for your hard work. Check with your school's transfer policy before paying.

**2. Let you test out your major before committing-** In most cases, the major you choose heavily influences the college you attend and your future career path. High school students can complete a MOOC course in their prospective major to see if it's the right fit. This risk-free, money-free method will help you figure out what major to choose and ultimately save you money. Starting college knowing what you want to study means that you won't waste time bouncing between majors and paying for useless classes.

**3. Familiarize you with college-level learning before enrolling-** Wondering if college learning is right for you? Taking a MOOC will help you understand what college classes are like before you're paying for them. The tests you take and assignments you complete offer insight into what the next four years might look like. If possible, try out a course at a college you're considering attending.

**4. Prepare you academically for college-** Feeling unprepared for college? You're not alone. In 2010, nearly 70% of high school seniors accepted to college were unprepared. Many MOOCs are designed to help combat this unpreparedness. Some MOOCs for high school students include entry-level math, first-year composition, and pre-calculus. Talk to your guidance counselor or teachers to see what areas they recommend you focus on.

**5. Learn from peers around the world-** Anyone from any country with internet access can take a MOOC class. Participants can communicate with one another through discussion threads and social networking. Just like in a real classroom, you'll learn from your peers and possibly broaden your worldview too.

**6. They're open to everyone-** Another one of the advantages of MOOCs is that there are no prerequisites for MOOC learning. You can sign up for any class no matter your background or age. Just be prepared to put in the effort.

**7. MOOCs are available in different languages-** Your course options aren't restricted just based on where you live. Enjoy courses taught in foreign countries without hesitation thanks to subtitles. Subtitles also make these courses friendly to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**8. Learn a language for FREE-** Rosetta Stone is expensive, and in-person language classes might move too quickly for you. MOOCs are a free way to learn a new language at your own pace. Easily return to lectures as needed and take your time learning instead of cramming for exams.

**9. Offer FREE AP exam preparation and courses-** Harvard University and MIT's edX MOOC platform offers FREE AP exam preparation and courses. You can learn confusing material at your own pace outside of your high school classroom. These supplementary courses will help you achieve high AP exam scores that in turn will give you college credit.

**10. Help your college and scholarship applications stand out-** Anything you can do in high school to show future college admissions counselors that you're serious about learning will help your application. Knowledge gained from MOOCs will also help in department or interest-specific scholarship applications and interviews. Plus, taking these massive open online courses shows initiative and intellectual curiosity. These are both



characteristics of a successful student.

**11. Boost your job applications and career prospects-** Employers look for several soft skills in their future employees. Some degree programs help students develop these skills better than others do. Free online college classes like MOOCs help bridge the gap between college graduate and employee. EdX provides several free "soft skills" courses that cover topics from teamwork to public speaking. This MOOC platform also offers paid professional programs that are certified. Their Soft Skills professional certificate program by Rochester Institute of Technology includes 6 courses and costs \$49 per course. You can also opt to take their professional courses free without the certification.

Completing MOOCs in a niche area can also help you secure a job. For example, say you're an English major applying to work as a copywriter for a web design firm. Taking a MOOC on basic web design or HTML coding will set you apart from other candidates. Students applying to grad school can also take advantage of MOOCs to help their university applications stand out.

**Scope for improvement in MOOCs-** As Eric Westervelt reported for NPR's "All Things Considered," "In theory, students saddled by rising debt and unable to tap into the best schools would be able to take free classes from rock-star professors at elite schools via Udacity, edX, Coursera, and other MOOC platforms." These online courses seemed capable of fulfilling the internet's early promise of making knowledge accessible to all. But whether MOOCs can make good on that promise remains to be seen.

Despite the high enrollment numbers, according to many estimates approximately 90 percent of people who sign up for most MOOCs fail to complete the course. In addition, a few high-profile flops have made headlines in the past two years. For example, San Jose State University's highly publicized experiment in offering for-credit MOOCs, in partnership with online course developer Udacity, fell far short of its goals.

"Completion rates and grades were worse than for those who took traditional campus-style classes. And the students who did best weren't the underserved students San Jose most wanted to reach," Westervelt said in the NPR segment. The University of Pennsylvania released a 2013 study of MOOCs that said only approximately one-half of those who registered viewed a lecture and that completion rates for the courses averaged only 4 percent. Even Sebastian Thrun, cofounder of Udacity, has acknowledged the failure of MOOCs to live up to their early promise: "Online education that leaves almost everybody behind except for highly motivated students, to me, can't be a viable path to education." The major reason for these failures, posits Geoffrey A. Fowler in the Wall Street Journal, is that "for all but the most self-reliant, online learning can be isolating." Disengaged students are more likely to perform poorly or drop out altogether.

Some instructors mitigate this problem by recording more audio or video segments instead of only providing written lessons. They also update content frequently, send motivational messages to students, or congratulate them for work completed. Online mentors, active discussion boards, quizzes, and other activities to break up lessons also have been proven to increase student retention and engagement.

Another tactic some online course providers have used is charging a nominal fee, from \$30 to \$90, to confirm a student's participation in and completion of a course. Coursera found that students who had shelled out cash for a course were more likely to complete it. Regardless of the delivery method, social interaction is key to effective learning, studies have found. "The most important thing that helps students succeed in an online course is interpersonal interaction and support," Shanna Smith Jaggars, assistant director of Columbia University's Community College Research Center, said in the Wall Street Journal article.

A recent study has suggested that blended learning, which combines interactive online components with face-to-face instruction, can be effective as traditional classroom instruction.

Now comes the recent announcement that Carnegie Mellon University has received a Google Focused



Research Award to tap the potential of MOOCs. A multidisciplinary team of researchers will use data-driven approaches to develop techniques for "automatically analyzing and providing feedback on student work, for creating social ties between learners, and for designing MOOCs that are effective for students with a variety of cultural backgrounds."

As part of the research, Emma Brunskill, assistant professor of computer science at CMU, and Kenneth Koedinger, professor at CMU's Human-Computer Interaction Institute (HCII) and director of the Pittsburgh Science of Learning Center, will leverage machine learning techniques to personalize MOOCs for each user, identifying which subject areas the student has already mastered and which might offer additional learning opportunities.

The second component-led by Carolyn Rose, associate professor in CMU's Language Technologies Institute, and HCII professor Robert Kraut-will consist of determining ways to improve retention through increased socialization opportunities, such as mentoring and team tasks. The two will also explore how to better identify students at risk of dropping out of the course and more effectively engage these at-risk students in coursework.

Finally, the team will research ways to make courses more fun and engaging through game play and culturally relevant content for users outside the United States. That component will be led by Amy Ogan, assistant professor in HCII, and Jessica Hammer, assistant professor in HCII and the Entertainment Technology Center. Google will provide \$300,000 in annual funding for two years, with the potential to extend the research to a third year. CMU hopes that the research will help MOOCs live up to that early hype.

"Unless the MOOCs pay attention to how people actually learn, they will not be able to improve effectiveness, and will end up as just a passing fad," said Justine Cassell, associate vice provost of technology strategy and impact at CMU and codirector of the Simon Initiative, a university-wide program to use science and technology to improve student learning.

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