ROLE OF MOOCs IN MODERN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

MOOCs are modern online courses for many participants at the same time ("massive"), without access restrictions ("open"), and in an online course format (with video lectures and integrated tests).The term "MOOC" was coined by David Cormier in 2008 to describe a twelve-week online course, Connectivism and Connected Knowledge, designed by George Siemens and Stephen Downes.There are two types of MOOCs-cMOOC and xMOOC. MOOCs created by universities or educational institutions are offered through various platforms like Coursera, edX, Futurelearn etc.MOOCs facilitate knowledge sharing, active and deep learning. The reach of MOOCs is very high in all parts of the world. MOOCs can never replace traditional teaching completely as many courses need hands-on training and it can't offer the teacher-student relationship given in traditional teaching. But MOOCs play a big role in higher education and professional development.

Keywords : MOOC, education, MOOC platform.

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INTRODUCTION

With the advent of technology, e-learning is rapidly gaining importance and momentum. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) are fastly becoming popular among students and working professionals as they help them to study at their convenience and time. If you have a computer and access to internet anyone can join a MOOC and fulfil their need for learning. MOOC is a new paradigm of education for anyone, anywhere, anytime. Websites such as edX and Coursera enlist free online courses from various institutes across the world.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

What is MOOC?

The acronym MOOC stands for Massive Open Online Course. MOOCs are modern online courses for many participants at the same time ("massive"), without access restrictions ("open"), and in an online course format (with video lectures and integrated tests).

History of MOOC

The term "MOOC" (Massive Open Online Course) was coined by David Cormier in 2008 to describe a twelve-week online course, Connectivism and Connected Knowledge, designed by George Siemens and Stephen Downes and offered at the University of Manitoba, Canada, in 2008.

In 2012, several other providers emerged like the Coursera and edX .

How MOOCs operate?

The learning content of a MOOC is created by an educational institution. The operation of a MOOC (course organization, administration) is coordinated by globally active MOOC platforms (e.g. Coursera and edX). The courses are listed by the provider and recognized by the provider. Aggregator sites provide comprehensive lists of MOOCs from multiple commercial providers .Usually MOOCs start on a specific date and run for 4-6 weeks. After a certain time, the video course then begins again. During the course duration, the learning content is usually accessible at all times. A student can work through the individual lessons at his own pace and at a time that is most convenient for him. For some MOOC platforms (e.g. edX), the content for self-learning is available even after the course finishes. Course content is delivered through short video lectures, slide presentations, and readings. Evaluation consists of multiple-choice quizzes, often embedded in the lectures, graded online for immediate feedback, with an option to be retaken for mastery. Weekly assignments or projects are evaluated by peer participants in the course. Most MOOCs are conducted in English. Some MOOCs are offered free, whereas some for fees; but a certificate of completion is given after payment of fees. Massive open online courses do not require prerequisites but may state what background is helpful for the course. Courses are usually less than 8 weeks duration.

Types of MOOCs

1. cMOOCs - facilitate learning through participant interactions with a network of individuals and encourage participants to create, share, and build upon each other's artifacts,(c denotes the focus on connectivism)

2.xMOOCs- are primarily designed to deliver education at scale and involve more structured and sequenced direct transmission of knowledge.(x denoting exponential, focusing on the massive enrolments, or extension,)

MOOC platforms

A MOOC platform is a branded website promoting courses bases on a common Learning Management System. The functions of MOOC platforms include technical hosting and publicity. The most important MOOC platforms are:

•   Coursera: Largest MOOC platform worldwide, over 20 million course participants. Many high-quality courses created by the universities of Stanford, Princeton, Yale, London, Munich, Zurich, and many more

•   edX: Second largest MOOC platform, around 10 million learners. High-quality content from Harvard, MIT, Berkeley and Oxford, among others. (More about edX).

•   Udacity: Created as a MOOC platform at Stanford. Now mostly programming courses in cooperation with industry partners such as Google, Facebook or Daimler. Course topics include artificial intelligence and self-driving cars.

•   FutureLearn: Largest European MOOC platform (UK-based). Includes various British and European universities.

•   Others: In India (Swayam, NPTEL), Russia (Open Education, Universarium), Brazil (Veduca), Indonesia (IndonesiaX), and Malaysia (Malaysia MOOC), Chinese provider XuetangX (Tsinghua University)

Advantages of MOOC:

(1) MOOC creates the opportunity for sharing ideas & knowledge and also helps improving lifelong learning skills by providing easy access to global resources.

(2) It improves cross cultural relationships which leads to collaboration between institution educators and learners locally and internationally.

(3) It gives an idea where we stand in the course in the current world as large number of students all over the globe would have registered for the same course on the same common platform and participate in the activities and discussion in the study group.

(4) MOOC enhances active learning.

(5) MOOC encourages flipping the classroom. Teacher-student contact time usually used for lectures could be used differently, e.g. for discussions, experiments, project and group-work, working with peers etc. Students watch lectures online at home and interact with faculty regarding their doubts while in class.

(6) Knowledge sharing in discussion forum helps reflective and global learners along with active and sequential learners. Reflective learners who are not able to share ideas inside the physical classroom can put their ideas in discussion forum and get the viewpoints of others. Global learners who feel themselves lost in the beginning can share their diverse ideas on the forum and can get other's suggestions to find their solution.

(7) As students are not studying for exams, it encourages deep approach of learning against the surface & strategic approach of learning.

(8) Peer evaluation provides the opportunity to learn via grading others.

(9) MOOC provides the opportunity to learn from world class universities and from renowned instructors without being a student of the respective university while sitting in the any part of the world.

(10) MOOC opens up the facility to get free of cost "statement of accomplishment" signed by the instructor of the course, which someone completes in all respect according to the requirement of the subject.

Disadvantages of MOOC:

(1) MOOC provides all the video lectures and slides along with all related reading resources. This gives the students scope for not going through the lectures gradually but whole lectures in a single day which does not lead to deep understanding of the concepts.

(2) Real time question answering is also not possible while going through the lectures.

(3) Technical courses needing physical hands-on practical exposures (eg. Civil, Mechanical, Electrical etc.) are quite tough to be delivered through MOOC.

(4) There is no opportunity for effective assessment methods like questioning and answering in classroom, surprise quizzes and presentations.

(5) No proper evaluation methods are there as automatic machine assessments and evaluations are not effective. Peer evaluation sometimes lead to discouragement among students which lead them to dropout from the course.

(6) MOOC style of education will gradually kill the care, empathy and respect involved between teacher and students in a physical classroom.

(7) the completion rate for MOOCs is quite low (often <10%).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Importance of MOOCs

MOOCs can be a way for universities to offer high quality, self-paced courses to fill the need for quality instruction for students who aim for studying at a university at a minimal cost.ThusMOOCs can help not only incoming college students succeed, but give a preview of a particular university's teaching style to potential applicants.MOOCs provides opportunities for expanding access to higher education to all and creates a space for experimentation with online teaching and learning.The 'digital footprint' of learners using the technology is captured in large data sets that can, potentially, provide useful insights into online teaching and learning with very large numbers of students at low or minimal cost.MOOCs would seem to have a logical role for professional development in the workplace, especially when teams in a workplace take a course together. MOOCS help address the problem of higher education budget constraints and help to lower the cost of degree. Commercial organisations see MOOCs as a way to enter the higher education market by providing a MOOC platform and developing partnerships with existing institutions.Health related MOOCs can increase the health literacy of the public with regard to the prevention and treatment of known chronic care conditions, provide ready access to continuing professional, and interprofessional, education, and explore innovative teaching models for student learning focused on patient- and family-centred care. MOOCs would also appear helpful to facilitate effective communication among international communities of patients and clinicians, including student clinicians, with shared interests.

CONCLUSION

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) are one of the most prominent trends in highereducation in recent years. It represents open access, global, free, video-based instructionalcontent, problem sets and forums released through an online platform to high volume ofparticipants aiming to take a course or to be educated. MOOCs promise to open up higher education by providing accessible, flexible, affordable and fast-track completion of universities courses for free or at a low cost for learners who are interested in learning. Open courses based on new structures, ways or working and use of technology can make higher education more cost effective and accessible and may also contribute to balancing work, family and social life.With the popularity of MOOCs, universities and colleges will need to rethink how to make their curriculum delivery models and courses truly flexible and accessible.

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