

# Globalization and Education: Massive and Open Online Courses, A Complementary Alternative

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## Abstract

This paper presents a critical review of the integration of massive online courses and Open-better known as MOOC- the global education system does. This tool, based on connectivism theory has proven to be an instrument of great importance, because of the changing world we live; these changes affect us all and because the scope of change outreach activities of personal and interpersonal learning to include larger scale organizational and social change, additional theories are needed to explain, to plan interventions and develop educational policies that are adapted to the new times.

**Keywords:** Mobile Learning, mLearning, MOOC, connectivism, collaborative learning.

## 1. Introduction

The omnipresence of the media such as television, radio, and the internet and its various aspects such as social networking and communication network that encompasses these is increasingly influential in gaining knowledge in an informal way in people. The use given to the media in the different educational and cultural institutions is increased more accessible as these new resources allow the dissemination of information of all kinds.

Young people not only learn in school, but there is a range of electronic devices capable of providing information that is transformed into actionable knowledge. "So one of the challenges currently have educational institutions is to integrate the contributions of these powerful training channels in the processes of teaching and learning, providing students the structuring and valuation of these scattered knowledge obtained through Internet "(Gómez Galán, 1999).

The specific use of ICT (information and communications technology) in each subject, it has become imperative given the gradual incorporation, both in training and obtaining learning of all citizens in the curricula of the current education system.

In this regard, over the past decade, the rise of mobile devices, social networks and learning that is facilitated by the use of cell phones and social networks has grown exponentially.

This emergence of new forms of education from the point of pedagogical and technical-has led to a search for new learning methodologies and moldings (Bauman, 2003).

This paper presents a critical review of the courses is done in Mass and Open, known as MOOC Line (for its acronym in English, Massive Open Online Courses), which are based on the theory developed by George Siemens connectivism with the contextualized character -mLearning- mobile learning (Siemens, 2004).

This theory and tools that can be generated from it is of great relevance given the current changing world; these changes affect us all and since the change outreach activities of personal and interpersonal learning to include larger scale organizational and social change, additional theories are needed to explain, to

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plan interventions and develop educational policies that are adapted to the new times (Vazquez, Lopez and Sorasola, 2013).

However, learning with mobile and wireless technologies is a very recent development, is an emerging field of action and great future; because the personal networks and mobile social networks can be small or large, but have a fundamental characteristic, they are: diverse, open, connected and autonomous, and this fits the custom features required by mLearning.

## **2. The MOOC: A New Alternative Learning**

Recently, MOOC have received wide attention from the academic community and the media, given their impact, are characterized as follows:

- Are online courses.
- No need for formal entry.
- No limit for participation.
- are offered for free.
- Do not operate a system of credits.

It is understood as a MOOC:

- Courses have a structured content, activities and various strategies for their development and are evaluated individually and collaboratively program.

- Open, as they are directed to the general public without distinction of any academic, personal or any other characteristic.

- Massive, because there is no limit of people who can enroll because, by their nature, can serve a number of users.

- Online, since such courses can be taken anywhere in the world that has Internet access from a mobile device or computer.

- Besides having very specific characteristics, these MOOC are divided into two different models (cMOOC and xMOOC).

- Model cMOOC (c for connectivity), which emphasizes ago-creation, creativity, social autonomy, learning network and focus on knowledge-creation and generation. The highlight cMOOCs connectivist tradition of philosophy and based on the work of Ivan Illich as a strong critic of institutionalized education. Illich proposed in 1970 to set-networks of learning-by using new technologies.

- Model xMOOC - which is more or less the approach described so far - but emphasizes a traditional approach to learning through video presentations and essays and short questionnaires, as well as duplication of knowledge.

Siemens (2012) states that cMOOC model emphasizes the creation, creativity, autonomy and social networking for learning, while the xMOOC model features a more traditional approach to learning through video presentations and games short questions and testing. Thus, cMOOC focus on knowledge, in creation, in the generation and management, while the xMOOC focus on knowledge reproduction.

While the topic of innovation in learning is certainly an important issue that deserves further observation and discussion, is a fact that xMOOC caught the attention of the public and are the prevailing so far in the network.

### 3. Who provides the MOOC?

All recent MOOC (xMOOC) are developed by private companies or non-profit, educational associations or universities. The usual division of labor means that institutions or academics are responsible for the content and quality of courses.

The following is a list of some of the companies and consortia that are developing assets such courses:

- Coursera: It is a for-profit company that is associated with prestigious universities worldwide. Coursera website was created by two professors from Stanford and has contracts with 33 universities, eight of them outside the United States. According to the website, more than two million students participate in Coursera. The quality of the courses offered is very diverse. Coursera and its partner universities allow academic freedom (Coursera, 2014). Website: <https://www.coursera.org>

- Edx: nonprofit institution, run by the University of Harvard and MIT. Currently offers HarvardX, classes and BerkeleyX MITX. Website: <https://www.edx.org>

- Udemy: Udemy is a website that offers facilitate learning and online education for all. In Udemy there are thousands of online courses with teachers from around the world who are allowed to create a course. In its platform it is offered: video, PowerPoint, PDF documents, audio material, zip files and live classes. Website: <https://www.udemy.com>

- Udacity: Udacity is an educational non-profit organization founded by Sebastian Thrun, David Stavens and Mike Sokolsky offering massive and open online courses (MOOC). According Thrun, Udacity the origin of the name comes from the desire of the company to be "bold for you, the student" (<https://www.udacity.com>). Website: <https://www.udacity.com>

- Future Learn: This platform was developed using principles of effective pedagogy for learning achieve massive scale. It is built on three fundamental principles: narrative stories world-class celebration of social learning and progress. Website: <https://www.futurelearn.com>

- UniMOOC: It is a platform that teaches open courses, for free, online and in Spanish. With the sponsorship of different Spanish universities and their line it is oriented to provide courses for entrepreneurs. The materials provided are open and available to stakeholders in order to create them according to the needs of each individual in any order without deadlines (Unimooc, 2014). Website: <http://unimooc.com>

### 4. Course Design and Management

MOOC development is given as follows:

- The institution enters into a contract with a company, for example, Coursera. It launches an open call among its teachers. The course is produced in collaboration with a team of professionals Coursera.

- A consortium of universities can create a company to serve their specific purposes (as in the case of EDX).

- The basic technical means are a camera, Internet access and a computer with the necessary software.

### Funding

The production of a MOOC can be quite expensive, since usually requires a great production team. It has been estimated that in recent months they have spent about \$ 100 million in financing MOOC United States. Only Harvard and MIT have invested \$ 30 million each in Edx.

Coursera, meanwhile, has attracted 22 million dollars in capital from private investors. That is why the MOOC are to be transformed into a product that will soon begin to generate economic benefits through some of the following options:

- Certification (students who pay a certificate).

- Evaluations (students pay for their exams are supervised).
- Human tutoring (unlike automated, as it is now) or the assignment of a tutor (for which students pay).
- The sale of the MOOC platform for companies who want to generate their own training courses for their employees.
- Sponsors (sponsors third of the courses).
- The tuition.
- Sell courses to other institutions of higher education, allowing them to reduce costs or to make their programs more attractive study.

So far Coursera offers courses for free and does not generate any cost. However, it has announced it will soon offer certifications at a reasonable price (under \$ 100).

### **The Students**

The motivation of students to enroll in a MOOC can be very different, depending on the course and theme. Groups of people who enroll such students and courses are mostly unemployed. About 40% of participants register because they are curious about it, another 30% want to sharpen their skills, and only 18% are aiming for a better job.

It is important to say that the students come from around the world. Coursera and Udacity both claim that most of their students reside outside the United States -74% for Coursera-.

Edx mentions on its website that more than 150,000 students from over 160 countries are registered for the MITX. The age of the students enrolled in these courses between 14 and 74 years.

### **A Learning Revolution or a New Business**

An article in The New York Times recently stated that "in recent months, hundreds of thousands of motivated students worldwide who lack access to elite universities have been embraced by the MOOC as a way for complex skills and therefore paying jobs without having to pay tuition or collection of a college degree "(Lewin, 2012).

However, if this were true, it would imply a real educational revolution in countries like Mexico, where 70% of people age into college cannot do so for lack of financial resources, or insufficient university coverage (Roman, Gomez and Revueltas, 2012).

The reality is different, the MOOC are not really revolutionary, since all elements which are developed already existed. Even the combination of the best research universities that offer online courses to a larger number of students is not new.

Moreover, many of today MOOC are quite traditional in their pedagogical and didactic approach is often of poor quality. Therefore, a first myth is that the brand of the university is a substitute for the quality of teaching.

The so-called elite universities have earned their reputation due to the research conducted by its scientists, however, this does not think they are particularly talented in teaching and especially online teaching (Bauman, 2007).

Then there is a question, if MOOC are not providing a new and far better education, then what is the purpose of the MOOC ?, and why some colleges who have not had success with online education They are so eager to try this model?

The answer may be that the MOOC is an interesting entire spectrum of offers continuing education and training addition, and will always exist there investors who want to generate new products for future earnings.

So universities, immersed in a competitive market to attract students have seen the MOOC as a business opportunity focused on business objectives rather than educational objectives.

### **Challenges and Problems Facing the MOOC**

Firstly, one of the problems they face with the MOOC is the identification of the student and ensure that the person who enrolls in the course is what really makes it.

However, there have been research that shows that people who attend MOOC do by mere training and for wanting to grow as professionals, and it is precisely this kind of people who are oriented such courses, in the same way The conditions of being free and without obligation to obtain credit enhances the premise that people who join them do to achieve their own self learning.

Moreover, the high dropout rate is one of the drawbacks in the development of the MOOC. One of the big differences with respect to e-learning in general is the massive characteristic of this type of courses.

The reality is that many enroll but do not complete the course because what we feel is curiosity or interest only part of the course.

### **5. Conclusions**

Education, with new technologies, opens many possibilities, but also makes new demands.

Furthermore, the curious phenomenon of the mass of knowledge through online courses with up to 160 000 students, it is important to ask what is the transforming power of the MOOC in learning processes, education and, of course, the sector higher education and its institutions?

While innovation in learning and teaching is not the immediate intention behind the launch of MOOC by public and private universities, it will be hard to push this technology into a real educational revolution that in addition to achieving a reduction in cost of education; use existing resources more efficiently, offering traditional students more flexible learning opportunities to achieve break language barriers (Sancho-Salido, 2013).

The MOOC can be part of a creative solution for local problems of access to education, using them for example, along with campus classes to create quality educational options in a region where there was none before.

The reality is that while the MOOC expand exponentially, the appearance of these will change the future of higher education; therefore, the institutions which have neither the resources nor the vision nor the strategy of the future, can be seriously damaged by the new competition.

Raises an important issue to be discussed, the digital divide between the developed and the developing world, the question of the relevance and applicability of knowledge in other parts of the world here and the fact that so far the MOOC not They have been considered as a means of addressing the problems of a particular region or city (Mosterín, 1993).

Emanating from this premise, then, the challenges that must be overcome regarding MOOC, which have to do with:

- The quality of course content,
- The perception that teachers have this new competition,
- The validity or non-validity with curricular courses,

- The model form of income or the MOOC,
- The need to evaluate the use of courses
- The uncertainty of whether the knowledge gained in these courses will be considered as structural knowledge or additional knowledge.

It is important that institutions have as part of their integration and advance new knowledge mission to assess MOOC institute; although it must assess whether it is something that can last over time or else is ephemeral and that seeks to benefit the certification of skills that will emerge in the coming years.

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