# Massive open online courses  (MOOCs) : An innovative  concept from e-learning

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## Abstract

*The rise of multimedia, radio, television and the internet has created the potential to conduct college-level courses and education beyond traditional university and college walls. Moreover, massive open online courses enhance college-level knowledge and learning which become available to thousands who have limited access to traditional college courses. Massive open online courses (MOOCs) are a flexible, open form of self-directed. online learning designed for mass participation. MOOCs have attracted thousands of people from all over the world. As such, at present. they seem to be only increasing access to higher education rather than broadening access.*

**Keywords :** Massive open online courses  (MOOCs), Social networking, Autonomous learning,  Mass participation, Debate forums etc.

## Introduction

Distance education has a long history; it has evolved with technology changes in the world from using postal services for the delivery of study material to learners and for submission of assignments by students, through using each new communication technology: radio, television, video recorders, home computing and internet. Unlike open or distance learning, massive open online courses (MOOCs) are a relative new learning phenomenon that provides a combination of e-Learning and open education opportunities. With the explosion of fast and inexpensive communication, social networking and active engagement of tens of hundreds of learners, the phenomenon of massive open online courses (MOOCs) can potentially create an impact on both technological and societal developments of personal learning environments across the globe.

The specific goal of massive open online courses is large-scale interactive participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as videos, readings, and problem sets, MOOCs provide interactive user forums that help build a community for the students, professors, and teaching assistants (TAs). MOOCs are a recent development in distance education.

massive open online courses provides more facilitates like with  free and open registration, a publicly-shared curriculum, and open-ended outcomes. MOOCs include different social networking, accessible online resources in the area of study to the help of students. Most significantly, MOOCs build on the engagement of

learners who self-organize their participation according to learning goals, prior knowledge and skills, and common interests.

## Meaning

 Massive open online courses (MOOCs) defined as a flexible and open form of self-directed, online learning designed for mass participation. In these type of courses there are no fees or entry requirements and no formal academic credit is available. While completion rates are low due to varying motivations for enrolling in a MOOC, absolute numbers of participants who complete are usually high. While access to the course material is free, MOOC platform provides often offer certificates of completion at a cost.

## MOOC's

## Massive

It should allow access to a very large number of students, much larger than a face-to-face class, or a traditional online course. These courses should be prepared to accept changes in the number of students in several orders of magnitude, for example, going from to 1,000 students, without a major problem for operation.

## Open

 Open has several meanings in MOOCs. -:

First type of meaning that the course should be open to everyone there should not require such as possession of a qualification or a level of performance in previous studies.

Second type of meaning that the access to educational resources (videos,  lecture notes) should be free (but other things, like being able to ask direct questions to the teacher, the correction of the activities, or obtaining a certificate at the end of the course mas have an economic cost).

## Online

Physical attendance is  not compulsory like a common classroom in these courses because it is done remotely via the Internet  This feature is essential for anyone from anywhere in the world with an Internet connection can participate in these courses.

## Course

It should have some learning objectives to be achieved by students after certain activities within in a given period of time (therefore, it should have a beginning and an end). In addition, it should have some quizzes and exams to assess the knowledge acquired by students. And there should be some kind of interaction between students and teachers in every possible way (student-student and student-teacher).

MOOCs can be simply defined as "online courses with no formal entry requirement, no participation limit, and free of charge." Oxford online dictionary defines MOOC as "a course of study made available over the Internet without charge to a very large number of people." Nevertheless, every letter of the acronym can be interpreted in different ways.

**Characteristics of  MOOC**

• **Autonomy:** The structure is conceived to promote autonomous learning with a number of resources in the form of videos, links, documents etc. and spaces for debate and communication.

 • **Massive:** The number of places on courses is unlimited, the scope is global and the courses are aimed at people with different interests and aspirations.

 • **On line:** To take these courses all you need is a computer, smartphone or tablet with internet connections and the use of a global web server (most platforms offer free apps). You can learn at home conveniently, flexibly and at your own pace.

• **Open and Free:** The course materials are available on internet and are all completely free (some courses, few, offer free access to contents, but the assessments submission is possible only after buying a certificate). Students just have to register beforehand.

**How is MOOC differ from e-learning Course?**

**MOOC**

• A technological design that facilitates the dissemination of the activity of participants through one or more platforms.

 • Open environment

• Free access

 • Massive participation

• Support of the community and of the instructors

• Range of communication tools, including the use of social networks

 • Emphasis on learning process rather than evaluation and accreditation

 • Depending on the platform, periodical sessions are open automatically

**e-learning course**

•  An e-learning course is a set number of functions and structure designed for  interaction with lecturers.

• Closed environment

• Access on payment of registration fee

 • Limited group

• Majority support of the teaching staff

 • Communication through debate forums

• Evaluation and accreditation oriented

• Offered at very specific moments of the academic year

**Conclusion**

Due to the growing interest of MOOCs , this concept has expanded rapidly over the past few years. Many universities and organisations have embraced MOOCs as the future of higher education. This popularity has led to the emergence of different forms of use. In some cases,  the initial concept has been distorted. In other cases,  it has become possible to use MOOCs in alternative contexts which they were originally created. Thus in present era MOOC is effective skill development tool for the students.

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