



Research Article

BOOK REVIEW: "MOOCS AND OPEN EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD"

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ABSTRACT

This book review describes Bonk, C. J. MOOCs and open education around the world. Bonk, C. J. book comprises the input of various educational scholars in the effort to explore MOOCs in excellent detail. This book is eight parts explains a broad range of concepts that are addressing a particularly topical issue about the subject of MOOCs. This composition of factors makes the views and suggestions that are made within "MOOCs and Open Education around the World" scholarly applicable and practical. The editors of this book carefully note that the study of MOOCs is closely associated with the leading academic universities in Europe and North America. Therefore, the book adopts a different approach to overcome this obstacle by concentrating on incorporating for all levels of learning institutions with its research in MOOCs. The misconception in this book is that it highly recommends that a combination of open learning and MOOCs has the ability to solve the current educational challenges. This book can be recommended to readers who require a broad look into MOOC trends. Bonk, C. J. book provides readers a balanced viewpoint on the current situation of MOOCs including their barriers, challenges, concerns, and milestones. "MOOCs and Open Education Around the World" should be utilized as an instructional manual for advanced open education and MOOCs.

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INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, the concept of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) has become popular as a result of a combination of factors. Technology and globalization have both contributed to the popularity of MOOCs. In the course of their propagation, MOOCs are considered either a solution or a problem to modern educational needs. This book is an attempt to explore MOOCs in greater detail, because it includes the input of several educational scholars. There are various contributors in this book but only a few editors are responsible for putting it together. While most books focus on MOOCs' instructional essence, this book provides a well-rounded insight of MOOCs. The authors of this book include various MOOCs' authorities from around the world. The book is also comprehensive in nature as it provides a wide worldview, which includes detailed forewords and an intrinsic index. This paper is a review of the book "MOOCs and Open Education Around the World".

Summary of Contents

The book is made up of eight parts, with each part addressing a specific topical issue in relation to MOOCs. Part one in this book addresses the history of MOOCs and explores some of the most notable challenges, constraints, and concerns that relate to open learning. The second part of the book addresses how various MOOCs policies have been manifested in various countries across the world including South Africa and Australia. Part three of the book is concerned about the research and evaluation milestones that are related to the progress of open learning. The subsequent part covers the issues that are linked to the quality of MOOCs while part five explores the innovative aspects of this concept. These innovative concepts include modern instruction models, courses, and programs in relation to both teacher and student inputs. In part six of the book, the editors explore how MOOCs have been adopted in developing countries. In the next part of the book, the current state of MOOCs is explored, especially in reference to corporations. The last part in this book takes time to address the challenges that MOOCs are currently facing. In addition, the last part in the book provides future projections in relation to the development of MOOCs.

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Major Strength

One factor that makes this book stand out from other available literature on MOOCs is that it covers a wide range of concepts in regards to this subject. Bonk and his fellow editors are able to accommodate the viewpoints of approximately 60 authors from around the world. Consequently, the book is able to accommodate a wide range of ideas from all these contributors. The authority of the book's contributors is not in question as they include company CEOs, founders of institutions, program managers, and academic scholars among other reputable figures. In addition, the book's contributors have experience working for major academic institutions around the world such as the University of Cape Town, Stanford University, University of Houston, Open University of Japan, and Stanford University. Organizations such as World Bank, Common Wealth, and Masie Center of education are also represented in the course of the book's twenty-nine chapters. This combination of factors makes the views and propositions that are made within "MOOCs and Open Education around the World" scholarly viable and practical.

Relevance to Scholarship

The editors of this book aptly note that the study of MOOCs is closely associated with the leading academic universities in Europe and North America. Therefore, the book adopts a different tactic by focusing on organizations of all levels. This strategy enriches the book because it gives the readers a more comprehensive overview of the progress that has been made in respect to MOOCs. For examples, the editors of this book aim to give readers a comprehensive understanding of MOOCs in regards to their regional, local, and international reach. The intention of the editors is to make this book a universal authority in matters of MOOCs. This goal is achieved because the issue of open education is conceptualized as a global issue and not as a matter that is only relevant to the elites in top tier institutions. Concentrating the research of MOOCs on open learning on one category of institutions has been instrumental in slowing down the progress of this field. This book overcomes this hurdle by incorporating all levels of learning institutions to its research on MOOCs.

Major Distinction

One area that stands out in this book is the chapter on 'Collaborative Design and Development of MOOCs for Teacher Professional Development'. The contents of this chapter are easily applicable to open learning. Anyone who is seeking to further his/her practical knowledge on MOOCs can benefit from chapter sixteen of this book. The chapter suggests concepts that can be used in any open learning environment. The contents of this chapter are quite relevant because they can be applied to a variety of scenarios. The same case applies to the chapter that is titled "Unbundling Higher Education and the Georgia Tech Online". This chapter is applicable to a wide range of fields including those that are outside the scope of MOOCs.

Main Misconception in The Book's Assertions

One glaring misconception in this book is that it strongly suggests that a combination of open learning and MOOCs has

the ability to solve the existing educational challenges. Some of the proposed solutions in regards to institutional issues include reduction of fees, increased student retention, and easier marketing. The book also proposes that within the current environment, MOOCs have the ability to bridge the socioeconomic gap that has continuously hindered access to education. The main issue with these proposals is that they are mainly one-sided and they are not critical enough. For example, the suggestion that MOOCs can deliver education to the disadvantaged and underrepresented groups is full of oversights. Technology is a major tool in the facilitation of MOOCs. Therefore, adopting MOOCs in developing countries would not be as easy as this book suggests. The book should have been more thorough in its assertion that MOOCs and open learning would automatically solve the issue of education access in developing countries. Nevertheless, it is true that MOOCs provide learners with more options in their quest for higher learning. However, it is unlikely that this form of learning would increase uptake of education in developing countries. The book is able to present a comprehensive overview of MOOCs whereby the editors are able to cover almost all the issues that apply to these concepts. However, the book lacks enough depth, as it leaves readers with more questions than answers. For example, readers are only able to get a comprehensive description of the major terms such as open learning and MOOCs. In some cases, different contributors within the book use some terms variably in different chapters of the book. Distance learning is an example of unclear terms in the book. In one instance, the term is closely connected to MOOCs and open learning, while on other chapters it is a more independent term.

Recommendation

This book can be recommended to readers who require an encyclopedic look into MOOC trends since the time of their inception. "MOOCs and Open Education Around the World" gives readers a balanced outlook of the current situation of MOOCs including their barriers, challenges, concerns, and milestones. Anyone who reads this book can be able to decipher the potential possibilities and benefits of open education. For instance, the book proposes that the 'open' nature of MOOCs is debatable because this openness is dependent on several factors. On another occasion, the Principal of Georgia Institute of Technology points out the imbalanced nature of MOOCs' delivery, mostly because they are primarily offered in English. Readers are also able to learn that MOOCs have a long way to go, as they are yet to overcome the handicaps of the 20th Century education.

Conclusion

Overall, this book is a rich source of basic information on open learning and MOOCs. The editors of "MOOCs and Open Education Around the World" are also able to communicate with stakeholders and practitioners of open educations and also introduce them to new concepts from other regions around the world. Some of the groups that can benefit from this book include university and college administrators, educational researchers, people who are seeking higher education, curriculum designers, and anyone else who might be interested in the mechanics of MOOCs and open learning. However, the book would have a better job of contextualizing MOOCs in

accordance with future projections. “MOOCs and Open Education Around the World” should be utilized as an instructional manual for advanced open education and MOOCs.

REFERENCE

Bonk, C. J. 2015. *MOOCs and open education around the world*. New York, NY: Routledge.
