MOOCs: What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know about Them?

Contact Person

Flora McMartin
flora.mcmartin@gmail.com
510-967-532

Leaders

Charles, Dziuban, Center for Distributed Learning, University of Central Florida
Patsy Moskal, Center for Distributed Learning, University of Central Florida
Glenda Morgan, Director of Technology Initiatives, University of Illinois, Urbana
Joshua Morrill, Academic Instructional Technology, University of Wisconsin at Madison
Alan Wolf, Assistant CIO for Advanced Computing Infrastructure, University of Wisconsin at Madison

Focus of MOOC forum

The aim of this self-study is to bring together STEM education evaluators and researchers to explore and potentially identify effective research frameworks for studying MOOCs. To look at research approaches that are currently being employed when studying the impact of online teaching and learning to determine their transferability to the study or evaluation of MOOCs. The focus is first broad to identify current practices, issues and problems associated with this approach to STEM education; the group will then focus down to more practical issues such as the effectiveness of a particular method (.e.g., the use of learning analytics or surveys).

As part of the forum, the group will use an asynchronous discussion site (IdeaScale) to expand on ideas and generate new information.

The forum will support discussion around three main topical areas:

Theory: How do MOOCs fit in the US STEM higher education system? What are the theories associated with guiding or conducting research on and evaluation of MOOCs?

Practice: What are the research questions and methods currently associated with the study of MOOCs? What are promising practices for evaluating the impact of MOOCs with regards to teaching, student learning, or with regards to an institution?

Implementation: What are the ideal circumstances to effectively implement MOOCs? What are the potential outcomes of implementation or non-implementation on a campus?

Expected Outcomes of PI Forum

- Report (white paper) on the findings from the forum.
- Identification of RFPs and potential funding areas - work plans for pursuing proposal to NSF on the study of MOOCS.

Meeting Schedule with Topic

This forum will combine formal meetings via the forum with an asynchronous online idea generating program called IdeaScale. The MOOC forum participants will meet initially to set the agenda for the forum. This group will then invite a larger group of NSF PIs and others to generate ideas about research questions and research needs regarding MOOCs via IdeaScale. IdeaScale is an online tool that helps groups generate, record and discuss ideas. After each idea session, the forum working group will review the discussion, summarize it and determine the next set of IdeaScale discussion items. It is anticipated that at least three iterations will be

conducted. in this process we take full advantage of the PI Forum structure to support a smaller working group and at the same time invite as broad as possible participation via IdeaScale. All forum meetings will be held at 11:00 am Eastern.

Meeting 1, September 16, 2013: Introduction & organizing the forum – who are we, and what is the purpose of the forum? Overview of 2 - 3 areas of interest e.g.,

- What are participants experiencing re: MOOCs on their campuses?
- What are the questions they want answered about MOOCS?
- What are the 'burning questions' that need immediate consideration?

Meeting outcomes: agenda for covering the topics raised from initial questions. Topics identified for initial IdeaScale discussion with the broader community.

Meeting 2, September 23, 2013: Coalesce around the first topic for the IdeaScale idea generation. Determine agenda and how the topic will be presented.

Run IdeaScale community discussion (October 7, 2013)

Meeting 3 October 14, 2013: Summarize and discuss IdeaScale results; plan next round of Ideascale discussion.

Run IdeaScale community discussion (October 28, 2013)

Meeting 4, November 4, 2013: Summarize and discuss IdeaScale results; determine if next round of discussion via IdeaScale is necessary, if so:

Run IdeaScale community discussion (November 18, 2013)

Meeting 5 November 25, 2013 : Summarize and discuss IdeaScale results; determine structure of report, writing assignments and discuss issues such as:

- What's the most effective way to follow up with participants?
- What kind of support is needed to study MOOCs?

Meeting 6, December 16, 2013: Open forum meeting to present findings to all participants in previous IdeaScale discussions.

Desired Participant Characteristics

See application process; applicants are asked to provide details about interest in MOOCs and involvement in STEM educational research or evaluation activities.

Application Process

People who are interested in participating are asked to provide a brief 1 - 2 page statement about the topics that they would like to see included in the discussions and indication of special background that they bring in one of more of these areas. Please send statements to flora.mcmartin@gmail.com. Topics to cover include:

Invitee's perception of:

- one to two of the most pressing issues associated with the study or evaluation of MOOCs in STEM education
- largest challenges facing researchers and evaluators who wish to study MOOCs
- the major research or evaluation questions associated with MOOCs

Invitee's experience in:

- Research of evaluation experience on MOOCs
- Research or evaluation experience STEM higher education innovative practices