BOOK REVIEW

MOOCs and Open Education Around the World

Edited by CURTIS J. BONK, MIMI M. LEE, THOMAS C. REEVES, AND
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This timely and engaging book, edited by four prominent scholars in the field of Instructional Technology, provides a comprehensive and highly current account of the fast changing world of MOOCs and open education today. The book consists of 8 parts. The first part of the book takes a look back at the history of open education and discusses several key problems, concerns, and constraints related to MOOCs and open education today. Part 2 explores the evolution of policies of various OER initiatives in the United States, Australia, and South Africa. Part 3 addresses research and evaluation related to MOOCs and open education. Part 4 focuses on issues related to the quality of MOOCs and OERs. Part 5 explores innovative MOOC courses, programs, and models of instruction. Part 6 offers insights into the use of MOOCs and open education in the developing world. Part 7 takes a look at the current state of open learning in corporate settings. Finally, Part 8 addresses the current shortcomings of MOOCs and provides insightful models and visions for the future of open education.

The greatest strength of this comprehensive book edited by Curt Bonk and his colleagues Mimi Lee, Tom Reeves, and Tom Reynolds is that it offers diverse viewpoints of MOOCs and open education. The 29 chapters and two book forewords were written by more than 60 authors involved in open education in a number of countries. These authors include founders and CEOs of companies or non-profit organisations, directors, and program managers, as well as academic scholars in the field of instructional technology. They not only come from university settings such as, the Open University in the United Kingdom, the Open University of Japan, the University of Cape Town, Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Houston, and Stanford University, but also from organisations such as, the World Bank Institute, MERLOT, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Lumen Learning, and the Masie Center. By sharing their unique views, goals, initiatives, success stories, and lessons learned, the various contributors help readers see that MOOCs have been used in many different contexts at different levels. A plethora of practical advice and guidelines are provided throughout the book.

As noted by the editors and several contributors, MOOCs are commonly associated with top tier research universities in North America, such as Stanford

University and MIT. By displaying many different types of MOOC initiatives and open education projects currently underway around the world, this book helps readers better understand the potential of MOOCs and open education to meet the local, regional, and global needs. It is worth noting that this book displays current MOOC and open education endeavours in 15 different countries around the planet, including Australia, Canada, Germany, Kenya, India, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the United States.

Various chapters in this book suggest that MOOCs and OERs have the potential to resolve various educational and institutional issues (e.g., reducing college costs, student recruitment and retention, and institutional branding). Further, this book provides insights into current and future possibilities of MOOCs and open education for disadvantaged and under represented people in developing countries. Several chapters document how MOOCs and OERs provide hope for a brighter future for those in less developed parts of the world. The editors of this book contend that the MOOC/OER world provides numerous "open options" for those who desire to participate as learners, educators, designers, or administrators. As such, this book provides many points to ponder and debate as well as myriad ideas for delivering education in unique ways.

This book provides a balanced view by addressing challenges, barriers, concerns, and critiques into current MOOC trends and implementation efforts as well as the potential benefits and possibilities of MOOCs and open education. For example, several authors—such as David Wiley of Lumen Learning—contend that many MOOCs are not fully open, and they provide insights into the meaning of openness. In a similar vein, some authors, such as Karen Head at the Georgia Institute of Technology, express concerns about the potential problems of the exclusivity of Western-dominated MOOCs delivered only in English. Others like Sanjaya Mishra and Asha Kanwar from the COL as well as Fred Mulder from the Open University of the Netherlands raise additional concerns related to the quality of MOOCs, pointing out that most MOOCs are still characterised by 20th century instructional philosophies and theories.

MOOCs and Open Education Around the World is a must read for scholars and practitioners involved in open education. It can be a great resource to a wide range of audiences, including university and college instructors, researchers, graduate students, administrators, instructional designers, corporate trainers, managers, K-12 teachers, and anyone interested in OERs, MOOCs, open education, or emerging trends in education. Given the range of potential audiences it addresses, the wealth of important issues raised, and the highly relevant implications, this book has my highest recommendation.

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