

Book Review

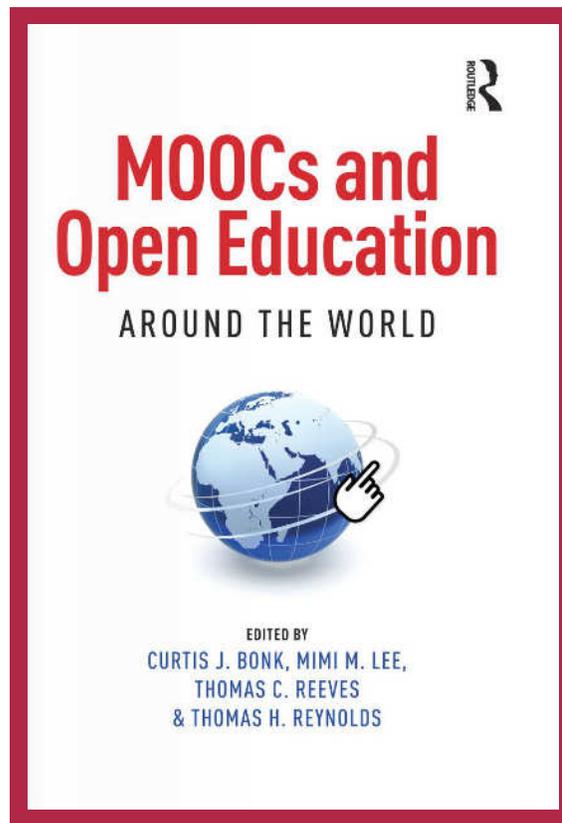
MOOCs and Open Education Around the World

Edited by - Curtis J. Bonk, Mimi M. Lee, Thomas C. Reeves, Thomas H. Reynolds; First published 2015 by Routledge, pp.358, ISBN 978-1-138-80740-2.

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The pace of innovation for learning delivery systems in post-secondary education does not appear to be subsiding. As we move from face-to-face delivery, to online, to hybrid approaches, and now to MOOCs, the learning landscape is continually evolving. While neither the idea of MOOCs nor open education are new, they both seem to have become more prominent as digital capacities to access and deliver content increase. MOOCs have now reached millions of students and professionals globally. In spite of their documented success however, the exact form and function of MOOCs in the future is still rather unclear.

In this edited volume, Bonk, Lee, Reeves, and Reynolds (2015) offer one of the most pragmatic, comprehensive, and balanced views of MOOCs and open education. The chapters provide readers both the breadth and depth needed to fully understand the history, current state, and possible future of MOOCs. Three distinct elements in the book include, (1) international examples of MOOC execution, (2) tools for MOOC evaluation, and (3) strategies for MOOC design. Yong Zhao states, “[The book is] a most authoritative examination of



MOOCs and their implications for education in the world from some of the finest leading voices in the field” (p. inside cover).

To set the foundation for the conversation, the editors offer a variety of perspectives and provide a clear understanding of MOOCs and open education. Then, a wide range of chapters by peers from diverse learning

environments take the reader through an international commentary with real working experience. As a specific example, Chapter 10 of the volume explains an exceptional tool for characterizing the pedagogical approaches of MOOCs referred to as the AMP method.

While there are criticisms of practice in the book, most come from within the MOOC community, which could be a concern. Perhaps some voices outside the community could be enlightening; never the less, the authors certainly do not try to present MOOCs as the next silver bullet for education in spite of the absence of external criticism.

One of the primary reasons Bonk et al. set out to compile this work was to balance the hype of 2012 with the hate of 2013 related to MOOCs. They wanted to replace hasty conclusions with “extended analysis, global discussions, and thoughtful report” (p. xxix). Mission accomplished! Interestingly, in the process, two collective conclusions also emerged. First, learning in any environment takes concerted effort, and second, human engagement is complicated because environmental and cultural variables have an impact on learning - it is not the delivery modality that matters most (i.e., face-to-face, online hybrid, etc.), but rather the pedagogical techniques and thoughtful cultural awareness that facilitate learning.

Reference

Bonk, C. J., Lee, M. M., Reeves, T. C., & Reynolds, T. H. (2015). *MOOCs and open education around the world*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Note: additional information at: <http://moocsbook.com/>)

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