MOOCs4D: Potential at the Bottom of the Pyramid

April 10-11, 2014

Presentation by Sandra Klopper
MOOCs and Development: Perspectives from Higher Education in Africa

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October 2013
Participants
MOOCs and Development Challenges in Africa

Competing markets and constituencies:

- Showcase African Knowledge and Expertise
- Resource social and economic development initiatives in Africa
- Local and national imperative: narrowing the gap between secondary and tertiary institutions through ‘college readiness or bridging courses’
Educational Mission of the University of Cape Town

These three challenges a perfect ‘fit’ given proactive ‘social responsive’ mission of the University of Cape Town:

• Pro Vice Chancellors in Poverty and Inequality, and Climate Change
• Commitment to improving transition from school to University
Problem of Resources

Workload involved in planning and developing content

- Preparation before MOOC began (excluding filming): 83% of respondents spent at least 10 hours a week, the remainder working 5-10 hours each week on preparation. Once their MOOC started, majority of teams (66%) spent at least 10 hours a week managing their MOOC.

*University of London 2013 report on MOOCs*

- Professional production staff: high quality video content, pedagogical and other issues, including copyright.
Governance and Strategy

MOOC Strategy Advisory Committee established Urbana-Campaign has met almost weekly since its establishment in April 2013
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<th>Time</th>
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<td>Group meets every -Monday for 5 weeks</td>
<td>Critical Thinking in Global Challenges</td>
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<td>Group meets every -Monday for 6 weeks</td>
<td>Understanding Research: An Overview for Health Professionals</td>
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<td>Model Thinking</td>
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<td>Design and Interpretation of Clinical Trials</td>
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Question for UCT: What do we need to do to achieve the greatest impact in and for Africa?
MOOCs - open & online

- Open content
- MOOC
- Online courses
Resourcing Development Initiatives in Africa

Academic Partnerships Guide to Quality in Post-Traditional Online Higher Education, published last week, foregrounds the notion of outreach in developing countries.

Two examples:

- Makarere University programme to improve the production and economic performance of dairy farms, captured in form of OER
- World Bank, in collaboration with the Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology engaged in a pilot to meet the specific needs of students who need market-relevant IT skills, and the Information Technology in Tanzania. Incorporates existing Coursera offerings
Narrowing the gap between secondary and tertiary education

• 50% of first time entering students in South Africa fail to complete degrees
• Lack of adequate career advice as major contributing factor to early drop outs
• Threshold concepts as stumbling blocks to success
• Inability to understand the requirements and constraints of the tertiary environment
Post-traditional v. first time entering students

Post-traditional students are typically able to work independently, while most school leavers seeking to enter universities in (South) Africa are not.
I Taught Myself

Empowerment as key to success

- Build resilience and self-reliance
- Foster a sense of agency and ownership
- Provide adequate scaffolding and embed digital and other literacies
- Short, three week interventions with aid of teachers as facilitators

Key to addressing massive skills shortages in Africa
EXISTING RESOURCES

- Khan Academy
- Educational Partnerships
- Futurelearn: Preparing for Uni; Study Skills for International Students
- Coursera: Advanced Chemistry; Preparation for Introductory Biology

Designing Career Guidance and other preparatory courses that are fit for the (South) African market