What Instructors Can Learn From MOOCs

The article linked here offers what some well-known professors teaching Human-Computer Interaction, Fantasy and Science Fiction, History of the World Since 1300, and Modern & Contemporary American Poetry have learned from taking their traditional lecture courses online for massive audience participation. All agree that there is no “one size fits all” approach to building an online course. They found the process of creating the course allowed them to become much more aware of what students are experiencing, and thus more student-centered. The professors observed their peers teach and learned which strategies worked and which did not. They also shared approaches to keeping students engaged. They were amazed at the quality of the student work resulting from collaboration and peer-review processes.


War of the Words

Textbook publishers and MOOC creators are about to collide over digital textbooks, which publishers don’t even want to call “textbooks” anymore. They are becoming software programs that deliver text, videos, tests, lessons, and more. At the same time, MOOCs, the new kid on the block, also deliver text, videos, tests, lessons, and more. Traditional textbook publishers, like Pearson and McGraw-Hill, are turning into tech companies that offer professors the ability to embed their own resources into pre-packaged courseware, thus fast becoming the new textbook. Some companies traditionally known as textbook publishers prefer to be called “learning companies.” There is new competition between traditional textbook publishers, open-source publishing, and MOOCs. The game isn’t over yet, but surely these three concepts will begin to merge.


Which Came First, the Chicken or the Egg?

As the cost of a college education increases, and more free MOOCs are available by well-known professors, more students are weighing whether work should come before or after college.

Enstitute, a New York City-based non-profit is promoting the idea of learning by doing. The way it works now allows a limited number of “Fellows” to receive free room and board and take six to eight hours of a mixture of online and offline coursework each week. They must also work for a startup host company in rotating apprenticeships. The apprenticeships cover three industrial areas: technology startups, digital media and advertising, and non-profit/social goods. Some of the companies include Tumblr, The Muse, New York Tech Meetup, Plant a Fish, and The Huffington Post. During this two-year apprenticeship, Fellows create a digital portfolio showing what they have learned while demonstrating their new skills. The coursework solidifies the foundations needed to move a work situation while also honing in on improving communication, writing, presentation and problem-solving skills.

Enstitute founders hope this will allow the job choices of future students to reinforce the education they receive.

The Suddenly Possible

This from Thomas Friedman, a columnist for the New York Times: “Big breakthroughs happen when what is suddenly possible meets what is desperately necessary.” Educators are increasingly aware that our “one size fits all” model of higher education is changing, and the expansion of online education has had a large impact on this change. One video linked below contains a panel discussion held at the 6th Davos Philanthropic Roundtable, where pros and cons of the online revolution were debated. They address changes from a variety of perspectives that make the video worth watching in its entirety. Included in this panel is an 11 year old girl from Pakistan who has taken multiple online courses. The second video is a TED presentation from last year by Daphne Koller, one of the Davos panel members, and founder of Coursera, awarded the most innovative company in education for 2013 by Fast Company. Fast Company is a business media organization that chronicles how companies change and compete.

Blackboard Learn Faculty Resources

Listed below are some resources that you can use ANYTIME to get help with Blackboard Learn.

- **TRCC Faculty Blackboard Resources** – This is a list of short videos and step-by-step guides to assist you with specific items on Blackboard Learn.
  
  [http://www.threerivers.edu/Div_IT/EducationalTechnology/Faculty_Bb.shtml](http://www.threerivers.edu/Div_IT/EducationalTechnology/Faculty_Bb.shtml)

- **Blackboard Learn Faculty Orientation Course** – All faculty are enrolled in this course. You will see it under the “Courses in which you are enrolled” list when you login to Blackboard.
  
  - **Self-Paced Modules** – Learning modules or folders on each tool.

- **Connecticut Community Colleges EdTech Videos** - [http://www.youtube.com/ctccedtechtraining](http://www.youtube.com/ctccedtechtraining)


- **On Demand Learning Center**: Video tutorials that can help supplement your users get trained. - [http://ondemand.blackboard.com/](http://ondemand.blackboard.com/)

Just for Fun

In 2011 the IBM supercomputer named Watson was a contestant on the TV game show Jeopardy and beat two of its most famous champions, Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter. Last month IBM announced that Watson will soon be attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI).

It is believed this project will help students and professors find new uses for technology.

How successful Watson is at RPI will determine how IBM will commercialize Watson moving forward. Watson is already in the beginning stages of use in the medical and banking fields. To learn more, see the post linked below.

Techy Tip

PixelTone

Photo-editing software can be difficult to use, and hard to learn. A new kid is about to move into the photo block. PixelTone, a collaborative project between researchers at Adobe and University of Michigan will allow you to edit photographs simply by telling the software what you would like it to do. The product is still in research, while you cannot look for it in the app store, you can watch the demo linked below.


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Call for Articles and Events!

We are looking for articles for future IDEA Center newsletters. If you would like to submit an article, please e-mail Nina Stein at nstein@trcc.commnet.edu.

If you have an event that you would like included in the “Calendar of Events” section of the newsletter, please send the information to Nina Stein at the above e-mail address. Please include the name of the event, facilitator, location, date, and time.

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Pinterest: A Way to Stick it to Them

Pinterest is a virtual scrapbook started in 2008, but has become much more widely used in the past year. Users can pin visual and audio links from the Internet onto boards and organize them into categories. Similar to Facebook, users have “friends” and you are able to view your friends’ boards. When a friend pins an item you will be able to see it and ‘repin’ it to your own board.

So, how can Pinterest be used in education? Instructors can pin images and videos to use in a lesson or unit. They can also create resource boards for themselves or students. Students can create boards for specific projects or assignments. The first article linked here contains more ways Pinterest can be used in the classroom. The next two links provide you with educational technology boards and inspirational pins.

Happy pinning!

Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers

This handbook offers teachers at all levels how-to advice on classroom assessment, including:

- What classroom assessment entails and how it works.
- How to plan, implement, and analyze assessment projects.
- Twelve case studies that detail the real-life classroom experiences of teachers carrying out successful classroom assessment projects.
- Fifty classroom assessment techniques.
- Step-by-step procedures for administering the techniques.
- Practical advice on how to analyze your data.

A Teaching Goals Inventory is in the beginning of this book for instructors to identify and rank the importance of their teaching goals and locate assessment techniques.

Assessing Student Learning: a Common Sense Guide

The first edition of this book has become a reference for college faculty and administrators who are in charge of assessing student learning. This book is divided into four sections: 1) understanding assessment, 2) planning for assessment success, 3) the assessment toolbox, and 4) understanding and using assessment results.

Introduction to Rubrics: An Assessment Tool to Save Grading Time, Convey Effective Feedback and Promote Student Learning

Studies show that rubrics save instructors time and provide timely feedback for students. If you do not currently use rubrics, this is a great book to get you started with lots of example rubrics ready to use. If you already use rubrics, this can help you modify your existing rubrics to encourage critical thinking, prepare students to use detailed feedback, and refine our teaching skills.
### March

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<td>E108</td>
<td>3/6</td>
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### April

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<td>Master the Grade Center</td>
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<td>Brownbag Workshop: What three things could I do to improve my blended course?</td>
<td>N. Stein</td>
<td>B214</td>
<td>5/7</td>
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The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. ~William Arthur Ward

Please use the NEW Training Calendar to register for the computer and Blackboard workshops located in E108.