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INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in technology, the global ubiquity of devices, and the increase of Internet users worldwide have ushered in new educational phenomena in the form of Massive Open and Online Courses (MOOCs) and Open Education Resources (OER). They promise learners abundant, cheaper and accessible opportunities to education with the existence of open educational resources and tools in the virtual world (Kim, 2015). They also offer innovative approaches to the development, dissemination, and utilisation of knowledge in teaching, learning and research. This article highlights some developments and applications of MOOCs and OER in Singapore, and discusses the promises and challenges that these new educational phenomena present.

WHAT IS MOOCS?

- A massive open online course (MOOC) is a free Web-based distance learning program that is designed for the participation of large numbers of geographically dispersed students.
- The word MOOC was coined in 2008 by Dave Cormier, from the University of Prince Edward Island for a course offered by the University of Manitoba, "Connectivism and Connective Knowledge."
- A MOOC is an online course with the option of free and open registration, a publicly-shared curriculum, and open-ended outcomes. MOOCs integrate social networking, accessible online resources, and are facilitated by leading practitioners in the field of study. Most significantly, MOOCs build on the engagement of learners who self-organize their participation according to learning goals, prior knowledge and skills, and common interests.
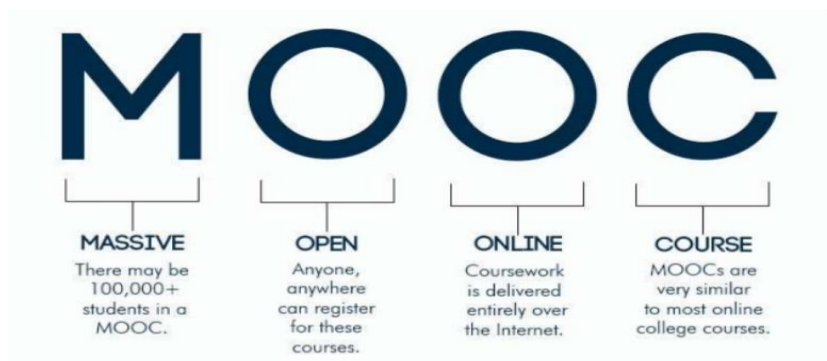
ADVANTAGES OF MOOCS

• No tuition fees

• Open access, exposing top level professors at schools that would otherwise be unavailable to much of the World's population

• Open courses for all interested, regardless of location, resulting in a more diverse student base

 • Students can collaborate with their peers from different parts of the world.

 • Students can share work, critique and receive others feedback. Provide online interaction amongst students.

• Some enthusiastic professors have found global sharing of knowledge more appealing. Many acknowledge that MOOCs help them re-evaluate their pedagogical methods, while improving knowledge sharing.

DISADVANTAGES OF MOOCS

- They make it easy for students to drop out.
- MOOCs do not provide active feedback due to large number of students.
- Students need to be responsible for their own work because MOOCs provide self-directed learning.
- Technical problems
- Limited real world engagement

CLOUD-BASED LEARNING

Meaning: Online learning, or e-Learning , that is available in the cloud; meaning that resources are stored in a virtual environment, accessed from various forms of web-enabled devices.

ADVANTAGES OF CLOUD BASED LEARNING

- Mobile, decentralized and just in time learning:

A more flexible learning mechanism is provided that aligns itself more closely to the learners day to day activities. In taking content outside the learning structures, cloud computing allows for the delivery of learning anytime and anywhere.

- Cost effective:

According to Marc Benioff, CEO of Salesforce.com, the cloud services companies of all sizes… The cloud is for everyone. The cloud is a democracy. If used properly, it is highly cost effective as institutes have to pay only for the server space they use and costs of maintanence and updates.

- Redundancy:

Use of the cloud includes storage of data and information across many different servers. This means that even when a computer has a glitch the information is still easily accessible. There is no longer a need to save data to a physical source like your desktop or USB drive.

- Increased Collaboration:

Being able to access materials online allows for flexibility and increased collaboration. Students and teachers are able to collectively contribute to projects online and build upon one another's knowledge.

- Increase Accessibility via Mobile computing:

Because using the cloud does not require as many local resources (RAM, Disk Space, Processor Speed) it easily allows for mobile computing. This means that the user can access anything on the cloud from multiple devices including smartphones, laptops and tablets. Students and teachers are able to access materials regardless from the geographic location as long as they have a reliable internet connection. It can allow a student who has to miss school to access information, or a traveling teacher to keep in touch with her class' progress.

CONCLUSION:

In promising accessible, inclusive, massive and free offerings, both MOOCs and OER usher a new paradigm to education. The popularity of MOOCs has drawn attention from institutions, governments and private investors around the globe trying to build their brands and to enter the education and training market. The draw of OER is evident from the emergence of a ground-up community of passionate developers, educators, and users in Singapore and around the world. While the possibilities of MOOCs and OER can be attractive, it is important to remain cognisant of the implications and limitations, which these new phenomena also bring. As emerging trends that have the potential to radically shape the educational landscape, a deeper study on MOOCs and OER in Singapore, as well as their impact on policy and legislation in specific societal and national contexts, can be illuminating.

Sources:

1) Wikipedia
2) Reference books
3) Slideshare.com and other internet sources