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Использование информационных технологий в обучении: массовые открытые онлайн курсы

Данная статья посвящена рассмотрению новой популярной тенденции в образовании – массовым открытым онлайн курсам (МООК). В статье приводятся типы МООК и их основные характеристики и отличия, рассматриваются преимущества и возможные недостатки данного вида обучения.

Use of information technologies in education: Massive Open Online Courses

Information technologies and modern devices are used more and more often nowadays. Their use concerns different contexts, ranging from everyday life communication to professional areas, including such fields as medicine, security protection and education. Moreover, digital resources and tools have become an integral part of modern educational process; they bring benefit both to students and teachers. Such technologies are predominantly embraced by the sphere of higher education and academic study.

One of possible ways of information technologies application in learning is distant education. The most recent development of distant education is represented by MOOCs. MOOCs are classes that are taught online to large numbers of students, with minimal involvement by professors. Typically, students watch short video lectures and complete assignments that are graded either by machines or by other students. That way a lone professor can support a class with hundreds of thousands of participants [1].

As MOOCs have evolved, there appear to be two distinct types, particularly in terms of their designand philosophical position: those that emphasize the connectivist philosophy, and those that resemble more traditional courses. To distinguish the two, Stephen Downes proposed the terms "cMOOC" and "xMOOC"[3].

xMOOCs have the following common design features:

• *video lectures*: xMOOCs use the standard lecture mode, but they are delivered online by participants downloading on demand recorded video lectures. These video lectures are normally available on a weekly basis over a period of 10-13 weeks. Initially these were often 50 minute lectures, but as a result of experience some xMOOCs now are using shorter recordings (sometimes down to 15 minutes in length) and thus there may be more video segments. Over time, xMOOC courses, as well as the videos, are becoming shorter in length, some now lasting only five weeks;

• *computer-marked assignments*: students complete an online test and receive immediate computerised feedback. These tests are usually offered throughout the course, and may be used just for participant feedback. Alternatively the tests may be used for determining the award of a certificate. Another option is for an end of course grade or certificate based solely on an end-of-course online test. Most xMOOC assignments are based on multiple-choice, computer-marked questions, but some MOOCs have also used text or formula boxes for participants to enter answers, such as coding in a computer science course, or mathematical formulae, and in one or two cases, short text answers, but in all cases these are computer-marked [2];

• *peer assessment*: some xMOOCs have experimented with assigning students randomly to small groups for peer assessment, especially for more open-ended or more evaluative assignment questions. This has often proved problematic though because of wide variations in expertise between the different members of a group, and because of the different levels of involvement in the course of different participants;

• *supporting materials*: sometimes copies of slides, supplementary audio files, urls to other resources, and online articles may be included for downloading by participants;

• *a shared comment/discussion space* where participants can post questions, ask for help, or comment on the content of the course;

- *no or very light discussion moderation*: the extent to which the discussion or comments are moderated varies probably more than any other feature in xMOOCs, but at its most, moderation is directed at all participants rather than to individuals [2];

- *badges or certificates*: most xMOOCs award some kind of recognition for successful completion of a course, based on a final computer-marked assessment.

- xMOOCs, therefore, primarily use a teaching model focused on the transmission of information, with high quality content delivery, computer-marked assessment (mainly for student feedback purposes), and automation of all key transactions between participants and the learning platform. There is almost no direct interaction between an individual participant and the instructor responsible for the course [2].

cMOOCs have a very different educational philosophy from xMOOCs. cMOOCs place heavy emphasis on networking and in particular on strong content contributions from the participants themselves.

Key design practices in cMOOCsinclude:

- *use of social media*: partly because most cMOOCs are not institutionally based or supported, they do not use a shared platform or platforms but are more loosely supported by a range of 'connected' tools and media. These may include a simple online registration system, and the use of web conferencing tools such as Blackboard Collaborate or Adobe Connect, streamed video or audio files, blogs, wikis, 'open' learning management systems such as Moodle or Canvas, Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook, all enabling participants to share their contributions. Indeed, as new apps and social media tools develop, they are likely to be incorporated into cMOOCs too;

- *participant-driven content*: in principle, other than a common topic that may be decided by someone wanting to organise a cMOOC, content is decided upon and contributed by the participants themselves, in this sense very much like any other community of practice. In practice, though, cMOOC organisers (who themselves tend to have some expertise in the topic of the cMOOC) are likely to invite potential participants who have expertise or are known already to have a well articulated approach to a topic to make contributions around, which participants can discuss and debate. Other participants choose their own ways to contribute or communicate. The most common one is through blog posts, tweets, or comments on other participants' blog posts, although some cMOOCs use wikis or open source online discussion forums. The key design practice

with regard to content is that all participants contribute to and share content [2];

- *assessment*: there is no formal assessment, although participants may seek feedback from other, more knowledgeable participants, on an informal basis. Basically participants decide for themselves whether what they have learned is appropriate to them or not.

cMOOCs, therefore, primarily use a networked approach to learning based on autonomous learners connecting with each other across open and connected social media and sharing knowledge through their own personal contributions. There is no pre-set curriculum and no formal teacher-student relationship, either for delivery of content or for learner support. Participants learn from the contributions of others, from the meta-level knowledge generated through the community, and from self-reflection on their own contributions [2].

Even though these two models have many differences, both of them have also a number of advantages in common. Among the advantages are free or almost free access to the course, opportunities for participants which cannot take part in ordinary courses because of some reasons, relatively self-arranged schedule, a possibility for constant professional development etc.

Despite striking advantages and benefits of MOOCs, they still have controversial points. The MOOC Guidesuggests five possible challenges for MOOCs:

- relying on user-generated content can create a chaotic learning environment;

- digital literacy is necessary to make use of the online materials;

- the time and effort required from participants may exceed what students are willing to commit to a free online course;

- once the course is released, content will be reshaped and reinterpreted by the massive student body, making the course trajectory difficult for instructors to control;

- participants must self-regulate and set their own goals [4].

In this paper we have seen that distant learning in general and MOOCs in particular are a growing trend in modern reality. However, it is impossible to predict further development of these technologies. MOOCs give people opportunity to satisfy their need in constant self-education and personal growth, and provide free access to information, which is highly important for living in the modern world. But we should take into

consideration that the most effective use of MOOCs is to combine them with the other forms of studying and not to rely on them solely.

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Нейроэтика, новая прикладная наука

Нейроэтика – молодая перспективная наука, развившаяся из направления биоэтики. Постоянный прогресс био-медицинских технологий сформировал обширное поле проблематики в сфере применения научных достижений по отношению к человеку. В рамках нейроэтики рассматривается широкий круг вопросов – от лечения психических заболеваний до усиления когнитивных и психических способностей человека.