Chapter 11
Trends and Issues With Massive Open Online Courses

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ABSTRACT
This chapter reveals the overview of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and the implications of MOOCs in the digital age. MOOCs are the Internet-based courses which have large numbers of students involved. MOOCs have a potential for helping college students succeed and for giving a preview of a particular university’s teaching style to potential applicants. MOOCs can bring students from all over the world and encourage engagement between staff and students of a given university to interact with the wider public. Offering diverse classes on different topics through MOOCs makes it easy for students to keep up with the latest trends and be on top of their professional field. The chapter argues that encouraging MOOCs has the potential to improve educational performance and gain educational goals in the modern learning environments.

INTRODUCTION
Massive open online courses (MOOCs) attract many learners with a wide variety of educational backgrounds (Liyanagunawardena, Lundqvist, & Williams, 2015). MOOCs are advanced in their educational design in that they serve to motivate student engagement, and include the utilization of videos, blogs, forums, and podcasts, as an educational method of communication of both learning material and lecture delivery (Valentin, 2015). With improved learning framework from traditional open courses and enhanced digital contents, MOOCs provide various opportunities for online learning on a large scale with massive number of students, making distance learning more effective (Chung, 2015) regarding web-based learning in modern education (Kasemsap, 2016a).

MOOCs are an effective tool to deliver training to a large number of teachers and to facilitate their professional development in those areas whose skills are scarce (Hernández, López, & Barrera, 2015). MOOCs utilize networks that connect people across the globe to foster education that cannot be replicated in any walled classroom (Camilleri, Busuttil, & Montebello, 2015). Many prestigious universities have

collaborated to develop MOOCs that are made available to public either free of charge or at a nominal cost (Gupta, Taneja, & Kumar, 2015). Formal education models of curriculum design need to be refined to take advantage of MOOCs (Vovides & Inman, 2016).

This chapter is based on a literature review of MOOCs. It provides an overview of MOOCs in various disciplines, methods, and applications. It is hoped that this review will provide a contribution to practitioners and researchers by revealing the trends and issues with MOOCs in order to maximize the impact of MOOCs in modern education.

**Background**

The revolutions in the information and communication technology (ICT) in the 21st century have led to the tremendous innovation in education technology (Tezcan, 2014). In recent years, technological advancements have enabled higher-learning institutions to offer millions of independent learners the opportunity to participate in the open-access online courses (Mesquita & Peres, 2015). The increased flexibility in course offerings provides students with greater choice to engage in a range of quality educational experiences that are locally and globally contextualized (Hawkins, Martin, McKay, & Pattanayak, 2015). In terms of adopting new technologies to teaching, new forms of teaching (e.g., MOOCs) are increasingly recognized as a feasible future form of learning (Xia, 2015).

MOOCs have a large number of student's subscribers, which are geographically dispersed and not affiliated with the education institution (Reis & Escudeiro, 2016). Most universities have implemented virtual learning environments in an effort to provide more opportunities for current students seeking alternative and more affordable learning solutions (Mendoza-Gonzalez, 2016). Many universities and institutions are using platforms for MOOCs, characterized with a great diversity of topics and a huge number of enrolments. The real-time feedback is important for the effectiveness of MOOCs (Queirós, 2015). Learner interaction is central to knowledge creation and a key component of measuring learning outcomes in MOOCs (Chauhan, 2015).

**SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES**

This section emphasizes the overview of MOOCs and the implications of MOOCs in the digital age.

**Overview of Massive Open Online Courses**

MOOCs are the online educational course that is open to anyone to participate, often free of cost (Riel & Lawless, 2015). Pursel et al. (2016) indicated that MOOCs continue to appear across the higher education landscape, originating from many institutions in the United States and around the world. There is a wide variety of designs in the proliferation of the learning courses which have been offered (Blake & Scanlon, 2014). Luaces et al. (2015) indicated that the success of MOOCs is based on the fact that several MOOC providers are spin-off from the most reputable universities.

González et al. (2016) indicated that the main aim of MOOCs is to provide new opportunities to a massive number of learners to attend free online courses from anywhere across the globe. In contrast to the traditional forms of face-to-face education, MOOCs enable the flexible learning styles, where learners can choose which classes they take, as well as when and where they do their work (Walker,
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