LEARNING IN THE AGE OF DIGITALISATION

how MOOCs are driving a new wave of learning

In this digital era, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) drive a new wave of learning. Providing high-quality educational content through online tools such as videos, quizzes and discussion forums, MOOCs provide universities the power to connect and engage learners like never before.

In 2016 alone, worldwide MOOC enrolment grew by nearly two-thirds to reach 58 million students. What's more, there were 2,600 new courses announced in 2016 (up from 1,800 the previous year) bringing the worldwide total to nearly 7,000 online courses offered by 700 universities.

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) is one educational institution who is harnessing MOOCs to drive unique and engaging learning experiences. Offering nine MOOCs via the MIT edX platform, PolyU is committed to offer professional and appealing online courses for students.

Ahead of the **2nd Annual Online and eLearning Summit 2017**, Eric Tsui Chair, Advisory Committee on ELearning at PolyU explores the core elements of the PolyUX online learning strategy and how they are using innovative online teaching and learning styles to enhance the experience for students.

OVERVIEW

"Established in 1937, PolyU has nurtured over 355,000 graduates, many of whom have become leaders in their professional fields, contributing their knowledge and expertise to building Hong Kong's thriving economy and improving the world.

With 32,000 full-time and part-time students on campus annually, we also offer 200 programs via our six faculties and two schools, each with its own unique strengths.

As part of our online learning strategy, PolyU is currently pushing blended learning throughout all courses. This comprises of real-time internet lectures, videos and pre-recorded materials for the online classroom.

As well as large interactive classes, we also encourage and promote students to use the student response system, which is the quickest form of feedback. The aim is for students to share and discuss their opinions on different lecture points and courses in an online environment."

CREATING A SUSTAINABLE PEER BASED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

"The response system is something I have set up for my students and over 2000 of them have used it now. To create this system, I evaluated a range of web tools and out of that analysis decided to use Google Address Book, Google Plus Community and RSS reader. Together with these three platforms I have been able to enact a semi-automatic bulletin board.

This means that any webinar, article, topic or content covered in a particular course, will be automatically sent to everyone via these platforms and users can select individual materials to discuss, annotate them and share them around. Students can also add other articles to share with others and discuss. As a result, staff and students are engaging in a co-learning environment that persists beyond the semester as well.

I also provide students with marks for contributions through the online learning platforms, to train them into the pattern of continuous learning. This has worked out quite well in stimulating and convincing students to take up lifelong learning."

COLLABORATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO CREATE ENGAGING ONLINE CONTENT

"Three years ago PolyU signed up to MIT edX platform and we are currently in the process of renewing it. Today, PolyU has about nine courses on MIT edX. Most of these MOOCs have been delivered several times.

In many of our MOOCs, we live broadcast to the rest of the world using live session recordings. Making use of those opportunities we often link up with international luminaries so that people from various parts of the world who have special forte in certain subjects, can also participate in our MOOC.

As a result, we have created a very enriching environment, delivering the best content for a particular discipline for our learners.

When it comes to creating engaging online content, I don't use the MOOC as just a vehicle or platform for delivery. I use it as a platform to reach out to all corners of the world and source new content.

For example, in one case I invited the students to report their local case studies and applications via a weekly table. I constantly reviewed these shared articles and incorporated the relevant content into the subsequent MOOC delivery. So in effect I was actually crowd sourcing content from the rest of the world."

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH MOOCS

"MOOCs are very new to universities and very new to the academic, so there are normally different levels of resistance or an inclination to adopt amongst our colleagues.

Those who are more adaptive to change and are more attuned to the use of internet supported learning will move faster. But there are other ways to incorporate MOOCs into learning. For example, we are also promoting content for a few of our traditional classrooms. I'm encouraging colleagues not only to just develop MOOCs, but also consume MOOCs. It is important that they keep up with the rest of the world."

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Join Eric at the **2nd Annual Online and eLearning Summit 2017** where he will further explore:

- Personal Learning Environment and Network (PLE&N)
- MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) & flipped classrooms
- Co-creation of content and curriculum

For more information visit **https://onlineandelearning.iqpc.com.au** or call **+61 2 9229 1000** or **email enquire@ iqpc.com.au**

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