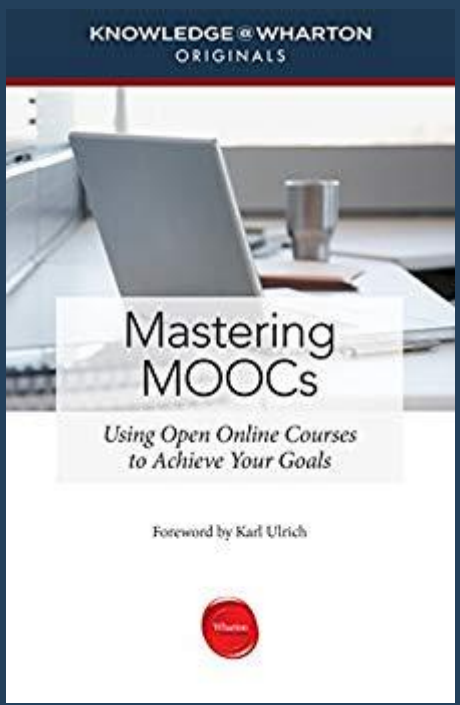

Mastering MOOCs

Year of publication: 2015
Author: Knowledge @ Wharton
Link for purchase: https://amzn.to/2XfxeNq

Many prestigious universities have offered the so-called MOOCs (open and massive online courses) that represent an exciting new feature in distance education.
It is now possible to gain access to the level of education offered at leading universities in subjects such as Fundamentals of Neuroscience at Harvard, Introduction to Negotiation at Yale, and Calculations and Principles of Synthetic Biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
The online journal Knowledge @ Wharton of the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania has published this guide that explains how distance learners can make the most of their courses.

Score

8

9 Aplicability
8 Inspiration
8 Innovation
8 Impact on results
7 Structure

Main ideias of the book

- Hundreds of universities offer MOOCs on a wide variety of subjects - and most of them open to the public;
- Some courses offer certificate of completion, charging a nominal fee;
- Millions of students participate in MOOCs;
- Students do not face any kind of pre-requisite for participation;
- Anyone with a suitable computer, browser and connection can participate;
- Students attend MOOCs according to their schedules and needs;
- Most invest four to six hours a week with online courses and related jobs;
- People enroll in these courses to expand their skills, increase their knowledge, complement their professional credentials, refresh their memories and solve business problems;
- MOOCs require self-direction, discipline, and a desire to learn;
- Online reviews help in course evaluation.

Overview of the book

The Value of MOOCs

Max Buckley was close to graduating from the Cork Institute of Technology in Ireland when he heard about open and massive online courses. Buckley wanted to expand his knowledge of new technologies and computers.

Thinking about it, he signed up for the free online Circuit and Electronics course at MIT. Buckley enjoyed the online learning experience, which led him to take more courses in computer programming that are offered by some of the most prestigious universities in the world.

While conducting a data analysis course, he enrolled for an internship at Google. His interviewer was enrolled in the same course, which helped him to get the vacancy and later to be effective as a quality analyst.

Just doing an online course does not guarantee jobs to anyone, but this case illustrates how students can learn from time, commitment and Internet connection.

Several universities work together with online education companies such as edX and Coursera. For example, when you enroll in a MOOC at the University of California, you take the course through the edX platform.

Online learning has been around since the 1980s. However, initial efforts were constrained by the limits of the technology available at the time. The availability of low-cost broadband Internet and cloud computing leveraged the MOOCs as a rocket.

Convenience

Online learning has been around since the 1980s. However, initial efforts were constrained by the limits of the technology available at the time. The availability of low-cost broadband Internet and cloud computing leveraged the MOOCs as a rocket.

Courses do not require an admission process or pre-requisites, and do not last as long as a conventional course.

They break down barriers between students and new knowledge, since it is possible to attend classes at any time and at the most appropriate time for the student.

Millions of Online Students

Faculties make MOOCs available on the web so that as many people as possible can take advantage of them. Since its introduction, millions of students have already attended, especially from 2012.

Some courses charge apprentices a small fee to deliver a certificate of completion. On platforms edX and Coursera, for example, a fee of $ 50 is charged.

Because MOOCs generally offer excellent teaching experiences developed by world-class universities and renowned teachers, they mean a substantial return on the investment of your time.

Some students report that they have earned better salaries by taking online courses.

Components and Features

In addition to standard educational components like video lessons, online quizzes, and reading assignments, the courses offer interactive forums in which students and teachers communicate electronically.
In the educational spectrum, an online course fits between a textbook and a college course. Many executives carry out this teaching method to develop their knowledge and skills, thus ensuring a solid foundation for managing or opening a new business.
Others, on the other hand, turn to MOOCs to solve problems in their business or to improve the skills of their team. There are still people who take the courses as recreation and to satisfy their intellectual curiosity.
However, executives who want to stay competitive need to maintain their skills, and online courses are ideal for this purpose. They offer quality information to enhance the curriculum and a higher education experience.
As courses become more popular, more managers accept them as legitimate professional credentials.

Basic Requirements

Thanks to the availability of MOOCs, anyone anywhere with a fast enough Internet connection, adequate processing power and a quality browser can acquire valuable knowledge efficiently.
This type of information was formerly available only to university students. A typical online course requires four to six hours of study per week, but that does not mean they are easy, and some can be quite challenging.

Learning Alternatives

Online courses represent just one of many options for those who wish to add to their education. Although involving more interaction than simply studying with a book, they are not as immersive as a typical classroom experience.
They are not meant to replace the rich educational experience of a college or an MBA, for example. In fact, they are important to complement academic training with quality.
A MOOC can serve as a gateway to more in-depth learning alternatives. They are useful for students who wish to investigate different areas of knowledge to determine if they are interested in further studying that subject through other forms of teaching.
Another important factor is that students can accomplish all of this without having to invest a large amount of money.

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Plan when and where you will study. Once you have defined your study plan, follow it rigorously;

Multiple educational choices

MOOCs cover an incredible array of subjects. Usually, you can find courses of any subject you want. As Piotr Mitros, from EDX, explains: "A lot of information that was not available before is accessible now."
In addition, he says: "In most cases, these more advanced courses were created by a teacher ... for a small class."
With the large number of choices available, finding the right course can be challenging. Expect to spend some time - and considerable trial and error - to investigate different courses before you decide which one will work best for you.
Trust your acquaintances to receive instruction. Ex students usually post reviews and criticisms of the courses. In addition, in the platform itself it is possible to find a lot of useful information and guidance on the study, such as demonstrative videos.
After setting the course, be sure to set aside time to complete your studies and be ready to increase this time if necessary. Here are more tips to succeed in your learning:

- Plan when and where you will study. Once you have defined your study plan, follow it rigorously;
- Determine if you need a certificate or some form of recognition;
- Make sure your computer, browser and connection are suitable for the course you want to do;
- Ask your relatives and friends to support you in your efforts.

Partners You

often learn more in a MOOC when connecting with people in your course. Communicate with them regularly through discussion forums and social media.
Closer learners can organize themselves and create study groups, so it becomes easier to understand the course content and its applications.
Use your complete course as a kick-start for more education, whether by other MOOCs, books, traditional college courses, or other training options.

Application in a company

Mike Belsito is director of strategy for Movable, a startup company in the area of health and physical activity. The main product is the Movband, a bracelet that serves as a personal activity tracker.
Belsito would like to learn about ludification and how this could improve the user experience. To do so, he enrolled in a wharton mocking MOOC and sent an email to his staff asking who would be interested in taking the course.
Almost a third of their staff showed interest and attended group classes. In this way, they were able to discuss content after class, as the director provided supporting material such as books on the subject.

Like Movable, many other companies see MOOCs as a valuable way to train and teach their employees. To apply for a company, some guidelines must be followed:

- Do not force employees. Promote courses as forms of training, along with books, seminars and specialized individual training;
- Use vocabularies and concepts presented in the MOOC, showing your application;
- Take the course with the collaborators;
- Use meetings to discuss the relevance of the course in solving company problems.

The Right MOOC

Despite the immense value of MOOCs, ensure that they are adequate for your educational goals before you enroll. In addition, they require a lot of dedication, self-discipline and a desire to learn on their own.
Consider these two points to ensure that the course chosen is the right one for you:

1. Map your goals

Decide what you hope to achieve by choosing a specific course. Do you want to learn new specialized knowledge, develop a new skill, improve your current skills or simply satisfy your curiosity?

2. Look for practical applications

Will the course help you improve your professional skills? Determine how to make practical use of your new specialty. Consider how the other members of your team will also benefit.

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