XJTLU MOOCs Symposium

11-12.30pm, Wed. 18th Nov. 2015, CB1113

Attendees:

Andre Brown (Chair, VP, Academic Affairs), Heather Knight (CAA), James Wilson (AEC), Roland Sherwood (AEC), Yao Wu (AEC), Chee Chin (CEN), Jionglong Su (MTH), Xianfen Kong (MTH), Gang Liu (MTH), Aaron Rotsinger (LC), Ellen Touchstone (LC), Steve Jeaco (ECC), Roger Lo (IND), Lifeng Ding (CHE), Eduardo Medina-Roldan (ENV), Paul Kadetz (DPH), Konstantinos Papangelis (CSSE), Jessica Sewell (UPD), Shaofeng Lu (EEE), Roberto Dona (IBSS)

Minutes:

1. The Chair opened the symposium by clarifying the event's purpose: with the inclusiveness of all interested departments, to make a decision on how XJTLU will move forward on the MOOCs agenda.

2. The Chair also introduced the approach the University of Liverpool (UoL) took regarding this issue, which has involved partnering with the "elite" FutureLearn platform (which normally only works with the world's top 100 universities, but would be very interested in working with XJTLU) and UoL has decided, at this stage to develop selective and specialized courses for specific purposes.

3. The Educational Technologist from AEC delivered a 20-minute informative and balanced presentation with the following features:
- The definition of MOOC is still the subject of lively debate without clear or sufficient agreement
- There are various taxonomies relating to MOOCs, such as xMOOC, cMOOC, miniMOOC, etc. As MOOC is a nascent and complicated area, there are many issues which require consideration.
- There are a number of MOOC providers across the world. The largest provider is Coursera.
- There are also many reasons why institutions offer MOOCs, such as humanitarian reasons, exploring new educational models, marketing and driving enrollment
- Considerations were raised :
    1) Huge cost: from $40,000 to $325,000 for one MOOC – with costs directed towards teachers, developers, studio set-up, etc.
    2) Which MOOC provider to choose
    3) Incentives for XJTLU MOOC participants – market research required
    4) How to measure MOOC success and long-term value

4. Participants followed with active and in-depth discussions about MOOCs. Below are the questions and comments raised about different aspects of MOOCs.

University MOOC Strategy:
   1) It might be worth noting if there is any research about whether there would be reputational damage for institutions that started MOOCs but later rolled back their efforts.

2) The possibility of embedding a MOOC development studio within the set-up of the new Film School.
3) If the goal of XJTLU MOOCs is to increase institutional visibility, it may be worthwhile to consider providers like Coursera or EdX which have larger market share.
4) XJTLU needs to have clear goals of MOOCs if XJTLU will offer a MOOC, such as who are the target audience? Is it to serve the society? Is it to attract more students to enroll at the university in the future?
5) UoL will offer MOOCs for mixed purposes, primarily motivated by promotional opportunities. Clips of the MOOCs were played in the Open Day, etc.
6) The cost and the gain of MOOCs for both the institution and the instructor need to be considered.
7) MOOCs may be considered as professional development for some staff members.
8) The qualification of the MOOC instructors needs to be considered
9) Regardless whether there would be enthusiastic volunteer staff members, producing MOOCs with good quality requires intensive commitment.
10) How to measure the quality of the provision of MOOCs

Chinese Context:
1) Online study programmes are sometimes regarded as inferior in China.
2) Bandwidth issues needs to be considered if XJTLU is targeting both domestic and international audiences. Coursera has a server in China, so Coursera is accessible in China.
3) The Chinese government is supporting leading Chinese universities with huge investments and resources. Universities such as Tsinghua also have industrial sponsors.
4) SIP and the British Council have funding for enhancing the entrepreneurial experience of students.

Possible content for XJTLU MOOCs (Market research required)
1) XJTLU can consider offering MOOCs on expanded or specialized skills to attract specialized students.
2) XJTLU can consider pre-master MOOCs concerning how to apply to UK universities, although it was acknowledged that there is a difference between an instructional MOOC designed for learning, and enhanced provision of information using multi-media.
3) XJTLU might consider MOOCs for high school learners.
4) XJTU might consider a MOOC 'taster' for credit bearing master programmes. The completion of the MOOC will count towards the on-campus, full master programmes later.
5) Currently, XJTLU has the technology to host a MOOC (or TOOC – Tiny Open Online Course) for a relatively small group of learners. But hosting MOOCs for thousands of learners would need a specialized provider. Additionally, resources available in the AEC are limited and any support requirements would need to be evaluated.
6) Some institutions record students' participation as well. This can be considered for first year students with previews of the interactive classes.

Others about MOOC:

1) Research shows that the majority MOOC learners are white males from industrialised countries.

2) Students can engage with MOOCs completely independently or pay to receive a certificate after completion.
3) MOOCs may come with ongoing operational costs too depending on the models XJTLU adopt. There are many different kinds of MOOCs. MOOCs are coherent courses with more than just videos, which are not emphasized in China yet.
4) People undertake MOOCs for different reasons, some for learning the content, and some for researching how others teach, others as an alternative to other search engines
5) There is a balance of the design of entertainment and content for MOOCs. They are often different in focus from standard credit-bearing modules