Authentication, MOOCs and OERs

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Authentication

- **Authentication** is the process of determining whether someone or something is, in fact, who or what it is declared to be.

- **Student authenticity** is the implementation of activities and assessment strategies that require the learner to apply the knowledge learned by using higher order thinking skills.

- "Examining the Effectiveness of Student Authentication and Authenticity in Online Learning at Community Colleges" Mitra Hoshiar / Dissertation / CSU, Northridge.

Can we authenticate users in MOOCs?

- more specifically, can we authenticate users in *cMOOCs*?
- are xMOOCs MOOCs or extremely large courses?
- can we authenticate if the goal is to transcend the limits of the classroom?
- credit by exam? yes, but then we are not talking about courses
- are (x)MOOCs open (education)?
- what about SLOs (student learning outcomes)?
- > because the questions and concerns are related to course credit, articulation and accreditation.
- so what is a MOOC?

Are MOOCs courses?

- MOOCs can be very disconnected micro-universes.
- Lack of focus or serious, profound analysis in MOOCS.
- "MOOC offered me a nice collection of links to read during the weekend"
- "The experience reminded me of many types of social media interaction"

Are MOOCs courses?

Options…

1.- MOOCs are not courses; they are something else.

2.- MOOCs are courses (in the classic definition) but we are almost certain that they will be very unsuccessful courses. To be more specific, we do not have any idea what the learning outcomes should be. We expect very little retention during the course and we are not going to officially document any participation.

3. We should question the word "course" or at least demand a clarification of what constitutes a course.

Perhaps the conversation should be about OER, CC and/or Social Media and not so much about MOOCs, because these types of discussions will move us to important and serious work, like those of Manuel Castells in Network Society, David Bell and Barbara Kennedy
in cybercultures and Open Education in general.

I am not proposing that we abandon the idea of experimentation with MOOCs. However, I can see the definition of MOOC as a drop in the vast ocean of OER.

Opening Up Education, by Toru Iiyoshi and M. S. Vijay Kumar / The MIT Press, 2008

"Today, a confluence of events is creating the perfect storm for significantly advancing education. With a growing inventory of openly available educational tools and resources, and with an increasingly engaged and connected community, transformative opportunities for education abound. We see a proliferation of new initiatives, many with the potential to radically change the ecology and the economics of education.

However, to date, many innovative educational endeavors still remain in isolated and closed domains, rarely shared across classrooms, disciplines, or institutions. Thus, educators find it difficult to advance their pedagogical practice and knowledge as a community."