MOOCs (Part Two)

(Massive Open Online Courses)

What of the pedagogical model?

In the last issue of this newsletter, we began a discussion about Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). We noted that these were courses delivered over the web to large numbers of students at a time, in fact in some cases tens of thousands. This development has been the technological innovation in education that has been discussed the most over the last year.

How to take a MOOC

This innovation has captured the interest and imagination of many operatives in higher education. However, there are continuing conversations about the appropriate business model that might be developed to ensure that it is of the greatest economic benefit to universities. There are also concerns about the basic pedagogical model. The basic approach to teaching has been the lecture strategy and students are expected to self organize for meaningful and efficient learning. Some major institutions have experimented with MOOCs as brand extensions; others are still trying to decide how they can fit it into their overall instructional offerings. One of the signs that seem to be hovering in the horizon is that MOOCs might cause the development of new approaches to credentialing.

UWI/GLL Premium Teaching Lecture 2013

A Learner-Centred Perspective to Teaching & Learning with Technology:

Dr. Yearwood skilfully demonstrated the new paradigm shift in higher education as he turned the Gold Room of the Mona Visitors' Lodge into a platform of engagement, dialogue and connection with tertiary level academics, students and members of corporate Jamaica. The challenge he subtly and overtly made to the audience was to be deliberately student-centred and engage learners in the classroom. His own use of technology in the lecture was very awe-inspiring as his knowledge and experience were superbly demonstrated.

Dr. David Yearwood, Professor & Chair at The Department of Technology, University of North Dakota, USA, driving home the point that learner-centred approaches to teaching can be enhanced with the use of 21st century technology tools.

Demonstrating the 21st century difference

The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, in collaboration with Guardian Life Limited, Jamaica, hosted the fifth staging of the UWI/Guardian Life Premium Teaching Lecture on October 10, 2013 at 6pm at the Mona Visitors' Lodge. If there was one word to describe the event it would best be summed up by the word "inspiring."

The audience was kept in rapt attention by guest speaker, Dr. David Yearwood, Professor and Chair of the Department of Technology at the University of North Dakota, as he made an energetic delivery on the theme "A Learner-Centred Perspective to Teaching & Learning with Technology: The 21st Century Difference."

Dr. David Yearwood, is quite animated as he communicates the idea that some changes will have to occur in the use of technology in the learning environment. For him the preponderance of text must give way to more video.

Dr. David Yearwood was not your typical lecturer, delivering from the platform and podium. He used the space available meaningfully to add to the dynamism of the lecture. He also reminded the audience of the need to rethink their work with students in light of modern technological tools. He felt teachers would need to do less talking in the 21st century classroom, ask more questions and allow students to come up with more answers.

Newly installed Deputy Principal, Prof. Ishenkumba Kahwa (left) actively participated in a "tech break" under the "tutelage" of Dr. Yearwood. He used various active and interactive teaching strategies in his lecture to model how faculty can keep the students engaged and focused on learning in the university classroom.

President of Guardian Life Limited, Mr. Eric Hosin (left) greets Dr. Yearwood at the end of the Lecture. Group Vice President, Mr. Glendon Gordon (middle) gives his congratulations to Dr. Yearwood for a job well done.

Premium Teaching Workshop

Each year, the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) organizes a Premium Teaching Workshop after the Premium Teaching Lecture or Premium Teaching Award Ceremony. This year the workshop was led by Dr. David Yearwood, the Premium Teaching Lecture Keynote Speaker and it was held on Friday, October 12, 2013 at the Mona School of Business and Management (South) Computer Lab from 9am to 12 noon. The focus of the workshop was motivating and engaging students in the university classroom.

During the workshop, Dr. Yearwood demonstrated how faculty might use various 21st century technology tools to engage learners. These included the use of jeopardy, power point, learning management systems, clickers, socrative and other classroom polling technology tools.

Attendance

The UWI/Guardian Life Premium Teaching Lecture was well attended by faculty of the UWI, Mona Campus as well as by teachers of other secondary and tertiary institutions. Guardian Life Limited continues to promote teaching excellence at The UWI through the annual UWI/Guardian Life Premium Teaching Series. The series commenced at Mona in 2004 and each year there is a teaching event of significant importance, usually a Premium Teaching Award for excellent teaching followed by a lecture on teaching, particularly on approaches that are more engaging and designed to enhance learning in the classroom.
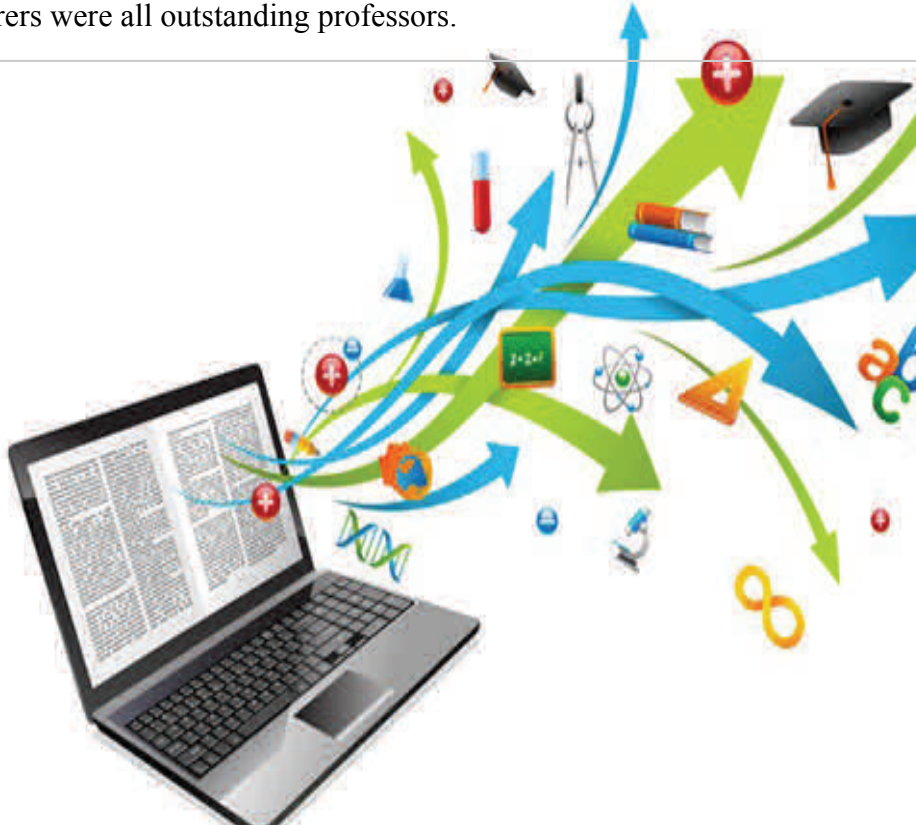
MOOCs (Cont'd)

(Massive Open Online Courses)

Early Developments

No one might have predicted that when in the Fall semester of 2011, the course "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence" was opened up to tens of thousands of students across the globe by the Professor Sebastian Thrun of Stanford University that it would cause so much interest or opened up what might now be called a can of worms. The interest and indeed the excitement initially caused by the technological innovation of recent time (MOOCs) have not abated.

Professor Thrun with the assistance of Silicon Valley investors went on to found Udacity, a for-profit online university. Later, a competitor university, Coursera was launched by two of Thrun's former Stanford colleagues and then some of the most prestigious universities on the East coast of the USA set up the non-profit edX. In this regard, all of these universities were offering MOOCs courses and the lectures offered were presented by outstanding scholars in the particular field. Of course, these would benefit students in developing countries and poor communities in the USA. The fact that world renown professors were giving the lectures would also likely see a spike in the enrolments since the lecturers were all outstanding professors.

Fred Martin, Professor of Computer Science at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and Clint Kennedy, doctoral student in educational psychology at the University of Connecticut: "offered the pedagogy embedded in the MOOCs is known to not work; lecturing at people across the board is known to not work," [as quoted in Scott, C.(2013, October 30). "Much hype, MOOCs maneuver towards version 2.0." *Singularity Hub.* Retrieved from www.singularityhub.com].

Although the message boards or forums are also used in many MOOCs courses, the interaction is fairly limited. There is very little debate and real discussion. Of note also are the problems with testing, since the courses are taken by tens of thousands of students. With Maths and Science, fields where MOOCs first started, computers were used to grade tests. The use of multiple choice tests are also easily marked. However, in the humanities, not many educators would readily gravitate to using multiple choice testing to assess achievement in the discipline.

Pedagogical Arrangements

However, now that some research has actually been done on MOOCs, some of the results are not too encouraging. Perhaps, the most damning declaration has been that pronouncement by some that the approaches to teaching are not able to advance learning meaningfully since the pedagogical strategy of choice is the lecture. Further, it is well known that a small percentage of students enrolled in MOOCs courses actually complete them. Of importance also is how well the students who are completing MOOCs courses are learning and the results of the early research on this issue suggest that they are not learning very well. Researchers and reviewers have fingered the pedagogical model.

The belief by some is that learning is a pretty messy affair and MOOCs communicates a message that learning is easy and uncomplicated and this is far from the truth. Some also argue that MOOCs work for the bright and well organized students, those who are successful and highly motivated. Hence, there are those who proffer the view that it will not democratize education because it really works for students who have learnt how to learn.

Those who have been instrumental in developing and delivering MOOCs have seen the criticisms and in fact are working to deal with these issues. Some are moving (for instance Coursera) to shorter courses to reduce the number of students who drop out. Others, like edX are offering small private online courses (SPOCs).

When courses are offered in this format, students have to apply to do them and their competence in English must be verified. There is also the experiment of live discussion and the possibility of engaging in teleconferencing for the discussion section of the course.

It now seems clear that MOOCs have come upon some snags and the original thinking of their ability to deliver higher education to non traditional students and make a profit might be harder to realise than was initially theorised. However, MOOCs will certainly respond to the challenges faced by their developers and those who deliver them. As we say in Jamaica, they will "wheel and come again."

Orientation 2013

In August 2013, the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) hosted the Annual Orientation to University Teaching and Learning seminar for new faculty members. This year twelve new faculty members signed up for the seminar.

Sessions

The participants in Orientation 2013 held August 22-23 enjoyed the presentation from the Campus Registrar, Dr. Camille Bell-Hutchinson. She deputised for the Principal and was particularly effective in communicating the aspects of The UWI strategic development plan relating to teaching and learning. In particular, she provided tips on how new lecturers could join the university in honing the skills and competencies of the ideal UWI student.

New faculty pay keen attention to a presentation at the annual Orientation to University Teaching and Learning.

Who are the Students we Teach?

The Director of Student Services and Development, Miss Rose Cameron also made a presentation to the new lecturers on the topic: "Who are the students we teach?" The focus of the presentation was on the generally observed qualities/characteristics of the UWI student. Her presentation identified some of the qualities of the typical UWI student. She was especially concerned about the deportment of students in the classroom and encouraged lecturers to hold students accountable for their behaviour.

Faculty as helping Resource for Students

Each year, the new lecturers are encouraged to utilise the services of the Counseling Unit and make referrals if needed for students who might need assistance in dealing with problematic issues in their lives. This year the presentation was done by Dr. Angella Gordon-Stair, head of the Counseling Unit at the UWI Health Centre and her topic was "Faculty as Helping Resource for Students."

The Library as a Resource Tool

During the orientation seminar, the library was also represented by the Acting Head of the Mona Information Literacy Unit, Mrs. Pauline Nicholas. She spoke on the topic of "The Library as a Resource Tool" and her presentation helped new faculty members to understand the various resources available at the library for their courses and how the library could in fact help to make their work easier. A major point made was that the library would undertake to get journal and other resources from cooperating libraries overseas for lecturers who might need these and sometimes these might be available free of cost.

Campus Registrar, Dr. Camille Bell-Hutchinson, addresses new faculty highlighting important aspects of The UWI strategic development plan, particularly plans relating to teaching and learning.

In particular, she offered the services of the library in guiding graduate students to develop referencing skills and underscored the point that the library was available to offer classes to groups of students who might need to fine-tune their citation and referencing skills.

Students' and Lecturers' Panels

Perhaps the "highest lights" of the orientation seminar were the panel discussions. There was a student panel on the topic "Students' Perspectives and Experiences of Teaching and Learning in the UWI Classroom." Of course, not to be outdone, there was also a faculty panel "Lecturer's Perspectives of Teaching and Learning in The UWI Classroom." Both the students and the lecturers provided meaningful insights about the learning environment on campus. Students encouraged the new lecturers to make themselves available to their students outside of the classroom and even to use multiple teaching and learning strategies to reach learners. The experienced members of the faculty panel provided insights about teaching and learning, including making the best use of the learning management system, preparing properly for classes and some methods and approaches they had found helpful including the use of humour in the classroom.

Faculty orientation 2013 was truly one focused on advancing teaching and learning at The UWI, Mona Campus. The sessions were infused with some tips on the technology resources available through the Mona Information Technology Services (MITS). Throughout the seminar, the participants received information from the financial institutions on campus about accessing their services. The seminar closed with the presentation of the CETL welcome packages to all new members of faculty.

Some members of the students' panel sharing their learning experiences with the new faculty. The students were representatives from the faculties of the Mona Campus.

Some participants of the Orientation to University Teaching and Learning strike a pose for the camera with CETL staff members.

Insightful and relevant presentations were made at the 2-day Orientation seminar. The presenters included (top row, from left to right) - Mrs. Delores Jones of Jamaica National Fund Managers; Mr. Anthony Perry, President of WIGUT; Dr. Sherline Brown, Lecturer, Basic Medical Sciences and Mrs. Pauline Nicholas, Librarian, Mona Information Literacy Unit. (Bottom row from left to right) - Dr. Monica Taylor, Academic Coordinator, The Writing Centre; Dr. Angela Gordon-Stair, Head, Counseling Unit, The UWI, Health Centre; Miss Rose Cameron, Director, Office of Student Services & Development and Mr. Roger Bent, Manager, Academic Support Unit.

Together these academic and administrative leaders helped the new faculty members envisioned The UWI as their place to shine and excel in teaching and impacting the lives of their students in meaningful ways.

Summer Teaching Institute, 2013

O ver the last three years, the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) has hosted a Summer Teaching Institute, to capitalise on the summer break when many lecturers are more able to retool and hence more available to attend faculty development sessions. This year the Summer Teaching Institute was held August 14-21. It took the form of two major workshops and three sessions of the programme in the Certificate in University Teaching and Learning.

Just-in-Time Course Design Workshop

The first workshop was a course design and development one held on August 14, 2013 and called Just-in-Time Course Design Workshop. This was led by the Manager of the CETL, Dr. Mervin E. Chisholm. Over 20 faculty members participated in the day long workshop and were introduced to approaches to designing their courses. Further, they had hands-on experience since they were all asked to take a course outline and use the opportunity to redesign aspects of a course or to develop one from the beginning.

Blended Learning Boothcamp Workshop

Over the past year, the CETL recognised that there was an increased demand for sessions dealing with the use of 21st century technology in the classroom. Therefore, a two-day blended learning boot camp was planned as the highlight of the Summer Teaching Institute. This blended learning boot camp offered faculty a path into the blended   learning world. The facilitator was Mrs. Michelle Stewart-McKoy, part-time lecturer in the School of Education.

Mrs. Michelle Stewart-McKoy guides participants through a hands-on component of the workshop.

The workshop was designed to provide information for faculty on how technology can be integrated into their courses and more-so, to provide for hands-on experience in designing and developing a blended learning course using the available learning management system, MOODLE. Therefore, blended learning techniques, strategies and tools were incorporated into the workshop and faculty were taught how to use these to design and develop high impact e-learning opportunities for their students.

The fifth cohort of the CUTL programme do an in-class activity during a session of the Assessment in Higher Education module.

Certificate of University Teaching and Learning

Finally, we must mention the three important days of learning about assessment in higher education. This was made possible through this third section of the Summer Teaching Institute. Faculty members enrolled in the Certificate of University Teaching and Learning were involved in three days of workshops. They pursued part of the programme requirement for the course in Assessment in Higher Education. On the third day, they were visited by the Pro Vice Chancellor for the Board of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Alan Cobley. He used the opportunity to encourage the participants to give full support to the change in the Grade Point Average Scheme to be rolled out by the University in the academic year 2014-2015.

Professor Allan Cobley addressing participants in the Certificate of University Teaching and Learning Session, August 16, 2013 at the CETL Training Room

New GPA Scheme to be Unveiled

In the academic year 2014 /2015, The UWI, through the Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUS), will unveil a new GPA Scheme. The three Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning on the land campuses of The UWI have been invited to work with the BUS to train faculty in applying the new GPA scheme.

In this regard, a seminar was held for Deans and Heads of Department at the Mona Campus on October 29, 2013 and the Manager/Coordinator of the CETL outlined how the CETL will participate in training the faculty in semester two of the current academic year, 2013- 2014. It is envisaged that several faculty specific workshops will be held in February and March 2014 to offer training to the faculty on how they might use the new GPA Scheme and especially the grade descriptors to inform the grading of course work and eventually overall course grades and programme grades.

GRADUATION 2013: Eight members of faculty graduated from the Certificate in University Teaching and Learning

Eight faculty members who satisfied the requirements of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and by extension The UWI, were recommended for the award of the Certificate in University Teaching and Learning at the Graduation Ceremony at the Mona Campus on Friday November 1, 2013. The eight faculty members are:

Keren Cumberbatch

Winston Delahaye

Lowell Dilworth

Peta Gaye Fairclough-Campbell

Caryl James

Arkene Levy

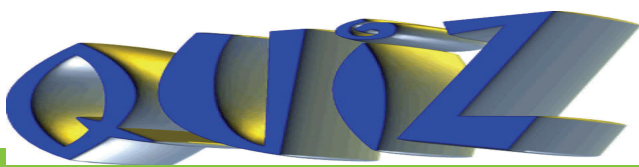Clayton Sewell

Jacqueline Martin

QUIZ

MOOCs? Questions

1. What does the abbreviation "MOOCs" stand for?
   A). marketing overall on campus
   B). more often open content
   C). Massive Open Online Courses

2. What is the limit for student enrolment in a MOOCs course?
   A). No limit
   B). 1,500
   C). 3,000,000

3. What prerequisites are needed to sign up for a MOOCs course?
   A). Introductory content
   B). Mastery level of content
   C). None required

4. What is Coursera?
   A). An Educational Technology Company
   B). An online platform for open access
   C). A Spanish course in MOOCs

5. Three major names in the world of MOOCs are?
   A). EdX, Coursera, MOOCs
   B). EdX, Cousera, Audacity
   C). EdX, Coursera, Udacity

6. What kind of a student is a "no-show" student?
   A). One who does not like videos on MOOCs platforms
   B). One who registers for courses but never logs in
   C). One who registers for the course but never shows up in discussions

7. MOOCs courses are
   A). Time bound
   B). Asynchronous
   C). Synchronous

8. True or false – A MOOCs course requires little input from the facilitator

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Blazek

Honey, it's been 45 minutes. I don't think he's going to call on you.

MELISSA MISUNDERSTANDS MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES

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Answers

1. C
2. A
3. C
4. A
5. C
6. B
7. B
8. T

Answers

Upcoming Activities

› **CUTL 5104-** Assessment in Higher Education *(Nov. 28, 2013)*

› **Teaching Skill Workshop** *(Jan. 13 - 15, 2014)*

› **Teaching with technology workshop** *(Jan. 16- 17, 2014)*