

Developing a MOOC: it's in the process, not just the product

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In a country like Sweden, where higher education is already free (at least for citizens within the EU/EEA) and with a vast selection of online university courses to choose between, one might ask why a Swedish university should engage in the MOOC business at all? Not only are our courses and programmes free of charge, but also – compared to most MOOCs – they have the advantage of potentially leading to university credits or even a degree. There are of course many reasons for producing MOOCs also for a Scandinavian university: to spread knowledge and education to developing countries, for market and recruiting purposes, to spread awareness of the research that is being carried out, and so on. What we would like to show in our presentation is evidence that the MOOC-production *process* may be as important as the product, and that the work process involved in creating a MOOC in itself can generate a value into the organisation that would be much more difficult to achieve through other means. This presentation should be of particular interest for teachers and pedagogical developers planning to develop or currently in the process of developing MOOCs and to university management.

John Kenny (2002) reports on key success factors for radical educational change projects such as: clear support of senior management; provision of adequate resources; a project team which is largely self-manageable and has a great amount of flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances; and that the success of the project is determined by how well the project contributes to the achievement of the strategic goals of the organisation (effectiveness), not just how well the project itself went (efficiency). The presence of these factors also seem to be present in many MOOC projects, which could explain the success stories describing how such endeavours have sparked a renewed interest in transforming higher education and discussions around pedagogy at those universities that have invested heavily in MOOCs (see for example Edinburgh University, 2013; Leiden University, 2014).

In our presentation, we will give examples of how the Centre for Educational Development (CED) at Lund University has worked in different ways to promote professional development for the teachers involved in the MOOC production and how Lund University students and former students have become engaged in the process of developing these courses. We will show that the process of producing MOOCs has proved a valuable experience and led to new insights about teaching and learning for both teachers and students involved in the MOOC project. We will describe how these experiences have changed the way we are now planning our future MOOC production and to some extent also the aims of the project.

References:

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