

Jenny Stine, Consultant, UNICON Session Summary: MOOCs and Executive Education

Jenny Stine shared a fascinating summary of her recent research into the emergence of MOOCs (Massively Open Online Courses). In response to her question, about one third of the conference delegates responded that at least one faculty member at their institution has expressed an interest in hosting a MOOC. She shared some statistics that suggest that the MOOC may be falling right in line with the overall increase in online education:

- 32% of higher education students now take at least one online course
- 2.6% of higher education institutions currently offer a MOOC
- 9.4% of higher education institutions are planning to offer a MOOC

Additionally, Jenny shared a couple of sobering quotes:

- “MOOCs will disrupt traditional education” *Clay Christensen*
- “Only 10% of executive education is safe” *Morten Hansen*

While the completion rate of MOOCs is only in the 7-8% range, the number of students who begin them can be as high as 125,000. One provider, Innovators Accelerator - a collaboration between The University of Phoenix, Clay Christensen and IDEO - is precisely in the business of delivering executive education online.

Many MOOC providers are creating relationships with companies that have been traditional clients for executive education providers. Their stated goal is to “deepen engagement at scale” with these organizations.

Jenny’s research suggests that despite the increase in online education, adult learners still value face-to-face engagement. Fully 85% of executive education participants surveyed prefer at least some degree of face-to-face contact, with nearly half of that group wanting little or no online content at all. One quite surprising finding of Jenny’s research is that the term “lower cost” has more resonance with the executive education audience than the term “free”.

Jenny maintained that “change won’t happen overnight, but it is happening”. She suggested that executive education providers try to view MOOCs from their faculty’s point of view, recognizing the financial (and ego-boosting) possibilities that exist for key faculty.

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