

MAY 2013

CONNECTIONS

Issue Topic:

VOLUME 7: ISSUE 2

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)



CONNECTIONS

In This Issue:

VOLUME 7: ISSUE 2: MAY 2013

Massive Open Online Courses

Note from the Editor:

What are MOOCs? What implications do they have for international students seeking to study in the United States? This issue seeks to answer these questions and more with articles and resources for advisers with varying levels of familiarity with MOOCs and the way they are changing the landscape of online education as we know it.

For the MOOCs novice, “MOOCs 101” offers a compilation of resources, including a glossary of terms, resources, and timeline detailing the evolution of online education. Before you know it, you’ll be using acronyms such as OER, OLI and LMS with ease! Don’t miss the two webinars featuring MOOCs experts, including the founder of Coursera, on the EducationUSA E-Learning Portal.

For the MOOCs veteran, the interview with Matthew McGann, Director of Admissions at MIT, on page five explores the challenges and opportunities MOOCs present international students and the way MOOCs will impact the culture of U.S. higher education. To ensure your knowledge of MOOCs is up-to-date, Raisa Belyavina, Senior Research Officer at IIE, who has been tracking MOOCs for the past year, addresses several emerging themes to watch and poses questions to consider as MOOCs continue to evolve. In keeping with the MOOCs theme, this issue’s edition of the Advising Lab features ways to use educational technologies (such as MOOCs) to enhance advising and offers best practices from around the world. And to round out this issue, the Arm Chair Tour features the EducationUSA Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which developed an innovative strategy called Stepwise that integrates *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* into advising.

The July issue of *Connections* will focus on Medical Education in the USA and serve as an update to the issue published in 2008. Please let me know if you have best practices to share on advising students on this topic.

– Shannon Harrison
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Features

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With a glossary, timeline and sneak peek of the recent EdUSA Connects webinars on online education, this article is the perfect MOOC introduction and refresher. Be sure to visit the EducationUSA e-Learning Portal to view the webinars.

5 MOOCs Impact on International Students: An Interview with Matt McGann

Connections interviewed Matt McGann, Assistant Director of Admissions at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to learn more about MIT’s brave commitment to make all course materials available to the world online for no cost and how international students can strategically use MOOCs to prepare for higher education in the United States.

7 The MOOC Metamorphosis of Online Education

This article highlights key themes to watch as MOOCs continue to grow in popularity, including the monetization of MOOCs, accreditation, and the role they will play in pedagogy for the 21st Century.

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Announcements, Updates & More

To best understand how online education and MOOCs are changing the higher education landscape and the impact they may have on students in your country, it is critical to understand the evolution of this new technology, the terminology, key players, and recent updates. This compilation of resources aims to do just that, with a glossary of definitions, timeline, and featured news articles.

Glossary of Definitions

2U- This business sells technology platforms, including course-work design, infrastructural support and capital, to institutions to help them deliver courses online for credit. 2U is now working with American University to deliver a web-based Master of Arts in International Relations.

Creative Commons- A non-profit organization that creates licenses that enable content creators to communicate which copyright privileges they reserve, and which rights they waive. Each Creative Commons license is associated with a visual symbol that explains the specifics of the permissions. Wikipedia uses one of these licenses, which you can find hyperlinked at the bottom of each page.

Coursera- Launched in 2012 by two Stanford University professors, this MOOC provider to date offers 215 courses to students in 196 countries (all but North Korea), reaching more than 2.5 million students. To date, Coursera partners with 33 colleges and universities to offer courses that span the range of academic disciplines.

edX- Founded by MIT and Harvard in 2012, this nonprofit project offer MOOCs for no cost by institutions such as MITX, HarvardX, BerkeleyX, WellesleyX, GeorgetownX, and the University of Texas System. For a small fee, students receive a certificate upon the completion of a course. MIT and Harvard have each contributed \$30 million to the project and are using outcomes from the project to further online learning research. In summer 2013, edX plans to make the learning platform available for no cost to institutions that want to offer MOOCs. Neither MIT nor Harvard students may take the online courses.

Khan Academy- Founded in 2006, Khan Academy delivers short lectures for no cost stored on YouTube. The majority of video tutorials are in the STEM fields, but there are also many on the topic of test preparation. The videos feature drawing on a white board and Khan Academy also introduced the first online practice system. Today Khan Academy offers more than 4,000 lectures and has delivered over 240 million lessons.

Learning Management System (LMS)- Help educators deliver eLearning content and provide tools to enable them to create learning exercises. Examples include **Moodle**, **Schoology**, and **Adobe Connect**.

MOOC- Acronym for Massive Open Online Course, MOOCs are online courses with open access, designed for large-scale participation. Learning is facilitated by online, interactive user forums that build a community among students and professors. Traditionally, students do not receive academic credit nor pay fees to attend; however, this is changing.

OpenCourseWare- Founded by MIT in 2002, this project makes all course materials available to users around the world for no cost online. Different from online courses, OpenCourseWare is a collection of course materials. There is no interaction with an instructor, no one to evaluate your work, and no certificate of completion granted. According to the [website](#), MIT OpenCourseWare averages 1 million visits each month. This has proved to be a tremendous resource for educators, who can access the syllabi, readings, lectures, etc.

Open Educational Resources (OER)- Freely accessible, openly licensed teaching materials, such as syllabi, lesson plans, videos, readings, and exams, that anyone can access for no cost and use for the “4Rs”—reuse, redistribute, revise, and remix. Term was coined at a UNESCO meeting in the early 2000s.

Open Learning Initiative (OLI)- Launched by Carnegie Mellon in 2002 and offers free online courses and course materials. OLI offers full, online courses not just course materials. Their slogan is “no instructors, no credits, no charge.” According to their [website](#), OLI currently offers 13 open and free courses. Students do not receive any verification or certification of completion.

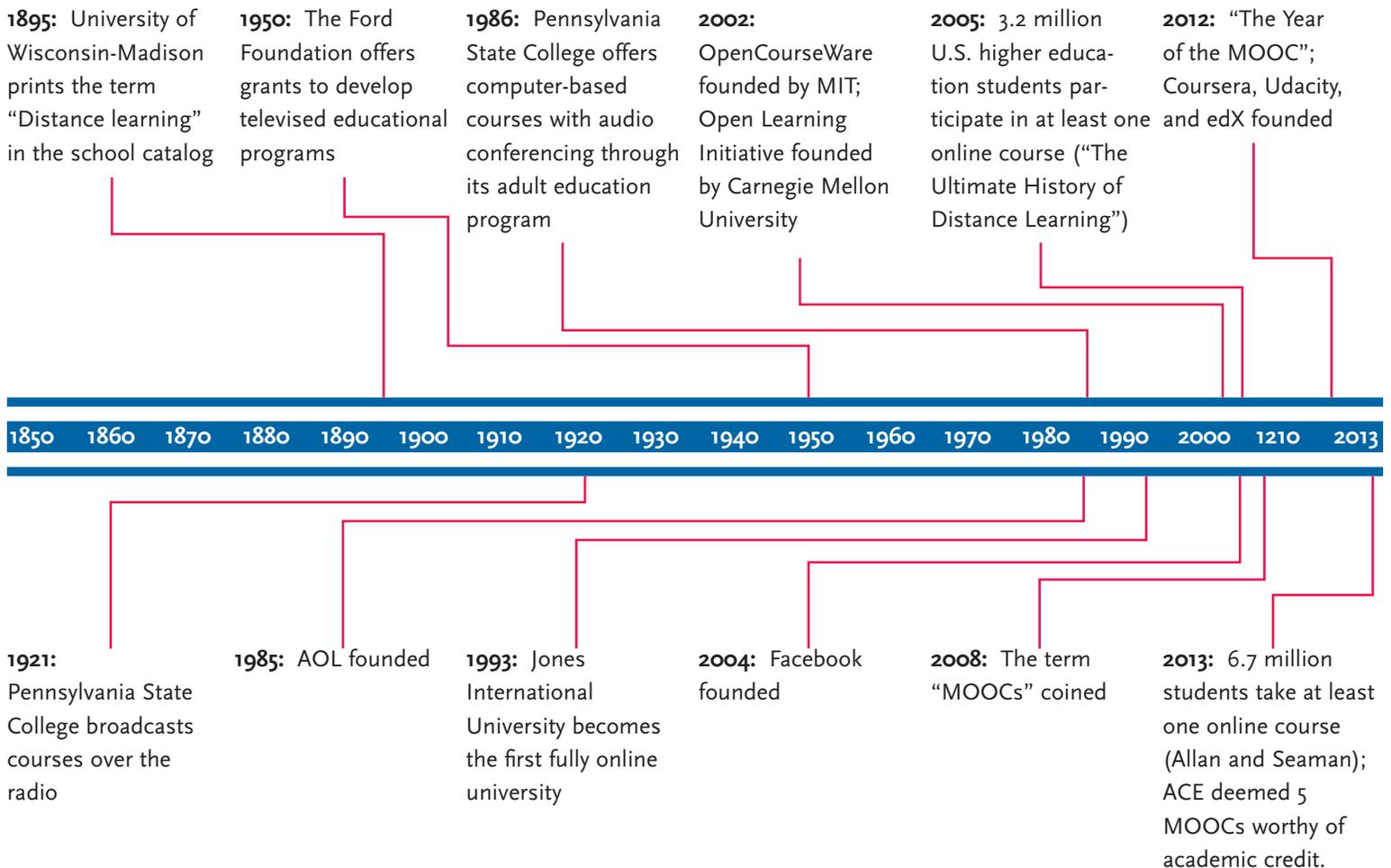
Open Source Initiative- A non-profit corporation formed to educate about, and advocate for, the benefits of open source resources.

Udacity- A private MOOC provider that offers 33 online courses to date. Course completion certificates are offered to students at no cost; however thanks to a recent partnership with Pearson, Udacity now offers students the ability to receive credit if they pay a small fee and pass a final exam.

Sources: Wiley, David. “MOOCs and Open Education”. [EducationUSA E-Learning Portal](#). May 1, 2013. EducationUSA. <http://ow.ly/huzwF>.

Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Web. May 2013.

Distance and Online Education Timeline



Sources:

“Timeline of Online Education”. 28 Sept. 2011. Timetoast. 13 May 2013. www.timetoast.com/timelines/timeline-of-online-education.

Wiley, David. “MOOCs and Open Education”. *EducationUSA E-Learning Portal*. May 1, 2013. EducationUSA. <http://ow.ly/hu2wF>.

“The Ultimate History of Distance Learning”. *Brighton School of Business Management*. 13 May 2013.

<http://virtualschoolmooc.wikispaces.com/file/view/distancelearning260312co.jpg/363179182/distancelearning260312co.jpg>.

Allan, Elaine and Jeff Seaman. “Changing Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States”. January 2013. Babson Survey Research Group. May 1, 2013. www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/changingcourse.pdf.

MOOCs in the News

ExEd Rejected, *Inside Higher Education*, April 19, 2013

To MOOC or not to MOOC, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 13, 2013

Learning analytics at Stanford takes huge leap forward with MOOCs, *Stanford Report*, April 11, 2013

The Real Winners of the Coming Revolution in Higher Education, *Forbes*, March 12, 2013

MOOC Skeptics at the Top, *Inside Higher Ed*, May 2, 2013

The Hijacking of MOOCs, *Inside Higher Ed*, May 6, 2013

Are Minority Students Excluded from Online Education?, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Audio, May 1, 2013

The World is Not Flat, *Inside Higher Ed*, April 25, 2013

MOOC Webinars

One place to start your learning is the [EducationUSA E-Learning Portal](#), which features the following two webinars on MOOCs:

- **MOOCs and Open Education** by Dr. David Wiley, Associate Professor of Instructional Psychology and Technology at Brigham Young University and Director of the Open Education Group, is an excellent introduction to MOOCs. Starting with Open Educational Resources and ending with OER university, Dr. Wiley gives an overview of key concepts, and guides listeners through the evolution of MOOCs.
- **The Online Revolution: Education for Everyone** by Daphne Koller, Professor of Computer Science at Stanford University and co-founder of Coursera, presents a thorough overview of Coursera, a leading MOOCs provider that partners with colleges and universities to offer free online courses. In addition to explaining the “education for all” philosophy that drives Coursera, the presentation includes inspiring student testimonials, examples of creative lectures, and understanding of their computer-based grading methodology. She describes Coursera as a mechanism that offers “booster shots” of education to students of any age in 196 countries.

Visit the [EducationUSA E-Learning portal](#) today!

Featured Resource

Changing Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States

www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/changingcourse.pdf

This report, produced by the Babson Survey Research Group in January 2013, is the tenth report in a series of publications that have documented online education for the past decade. The findings are based on responses from more than 2,800 chief academic officers at colleges and universities. Specifically, the study addresses MOOCs, the number of students engaging in online learning, learning outcomes, the value of online learning to higher education institutions, and challenges to widespread adoption of online learning. Key findings include:

- 2.6 percent of higher education institutions currently offer a MOOC, another 9.4 percent report MOOCs are in the planning stages.
- Academic leaders are not concerned about MOOC instruction being accepted in the workplace, but do have concerns that credentials for MOOC completion will cause confusion about higher education degrees.
- 69 percent of chief academic leaders say online learning is critical to their long-term strategy.
- 6.7 million students take at least one online course.
- 77 percent of academic leaders rated the learning outcomes in online education as the same or superior to those in face-to-face.

MOOCs Impact on International Students: An Interview with Matt McGann

Feature

With the 2001 decision to make all course materials available to the world online, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) quickly became the thought leader of open online education. Today, MIT's OpenCourseWare (OCW) initiative proudly offers materials from 2,150 courses on its website for no charge, and reports over 125 million visitors to date. To learn more about MIT's pioneering vision and how MOOCs impact prospective international students, Connections interviewed Matthew McGann, Director of Admissions at MIT.

Connections: MIT has been a leader in the field of OERs and MOOCs, first with OpenCourseWare, and subsequently MITX and edX. What is the philosophy behind MIT's commitment to sharing knowledge for free?

McGann: It starts with MIT's mission to advance knowledge in the world. Taking advantage of new technology to disseminate knowledge is a way to do this. During a time when institutions were trying to monetize online education and courseware, MIT did the opposite and took the lead in expanding access and making it free. At MIT, we have a spirit of openness, which can be seen in many ways. The inventor of the world wide web, for example, is a professor at MIT and the Open Source movement also has its roots at MIT. We are proud of this legacy and aim to maintain it.

Connections: Over the next five years, in what ways do you think OERs and MOOCs will change the higher education landscape, especially pertaining to international students studying in the United States.

McGann: Until recent advances in technology, it has been hard to see what is so special about U.S. higher education and why American institutions are so well-regarded for their quality. New technology will reveal some of the most distinctive elements of U.S. higher education, share best practices in a global context, and strengthen higher education worldwide.

In terms of American higher education and international students, open courses give students a new way to find the best fit and access to academic fields and institutions they may not have previously considered. For U.S. universities, OERs and MOOCs will help them promote themselves and find students who will excel in their institutional culture. The more students and institutions interact, the better the fit will be.



Matthew McGann is Director of Admissions at MIT.

Connections: Do you think MOOCs and OERs threaten the culture of U.S. higher education?

McGann: I don't think online education will erode the appeal of attending a U.S. higher education institution. I still think international students will still want to come to the U.S. and experience everything else associated with U.S. higher education, the residential aspect, hands on research—all the great things that happen when you put great minds in one location.

Connections: In what ways are international students taking advantage of OERs and MOOCs to strengthen their applications?

McGann: It's a little too early to know anything for sure, as there are not any established trends or policies. This is the first year I've seen students adding MOOCs to their applications. I'll be curious to see. At MIT and other institutions, we are always looking for students who will not only fit in, but thrive in our academic environment. Experiencing MOOCs might be one indicator.

The best part about this for international students is that OERs and MOOCs come with little risk. Students can try them out without fear of failure; if the course doesn't suit them, they can stop. For years, students have been asking me about online courses, and the biggest barrier is expense. Now, it's free! No longer constrained by finances, students have the opportunity to gain an additional credential beyond their high school curriculum, which may be better translated or understood by U.S. institutions. MOOCs and OERs enable students to demonstrate knowledge of the kinds of things they might be interested in, beyond the traditional high school curriculum. It's a nice signal.

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Connections: What challenges to MOOCs present to international students?

McGann: Some students confuse MOOCs with online degree programs. MOOCs are designed to provide just what the name implies—massive, open, online courses—and they do not provide the level of support given for a degree program. Online courses for credit use a distinct format with more human labor and less algorithmic peer grading and assessment. MOOCs, online degree programs and traditional residential higher education have distinct purposes, and students should carefully consider how the plusses and minus of each align with their goals.

"MOOCs are really cool; it is an amazing thing that not only MIT, but lots of institutions, are doing to leverage technology to open up the best of what we do at no cost."

Connections: Might MOOCs be a good way for international students to prepare for the U.S. classroom?

McGann: MOOCs are adapted versions of American university classes, so they can be a great way for international students to gain exposure to the U.S. higher education—the pace of the lecture, the jargon, etc. If the professor speaks too quickly during a MOOC, or uses unfamiliar terminology, a student can rewind or pause to look something up. MOOCs also give students a sense of their preparedness for stepping into this type of coursework. What are the differences in terms of workload, expectations, and analytical thinking? MOOCs are a nice way for international students to ease into U.S. higher education.

Beyond using MOOCs to help figure out where to apply, MOOCs are an excellent resource for students who plan to attend a U.S. higher education in the fall. They can use them as unofficial academic orientations to help them better understand what is ahead.

Connections: What tips would you give to international students thinking about participating in a MOOC?

McGann: My first piece of advice is that a student's performance in their local school will always be paramount to admissions officers. While MOOCs might be exciting in a lot of ways, students must they demonstrate academic excellence in their proscribed curriculum.

Secondly, there are only 24 hours in a day, and every commitment comes with an opportunity cost. There are many ways to exhibit academic readiness. If this is the primary motivation for attending a MOOC, a student should consider whether it is worth sacrificing other things. For example, if a student takes an A Level curriculum and rigorous course load, that might be sufficient to demonstrate readiness. A student interested in computer science, for example, could take a MOOC, but building their own software or working with

the local hacker community could be of equal benefit.

Finally, though MOOCs provide insight to the U.S. higher education experience, they are an imperfect proxy of the residential college experience. One example is the collaborative element of U.S. higher education, as opposed to the independent working environment of online education. One of the wonderful things about MOOCs is that they are building tools for people to collaborate online, but it's just an approximation of the type of interaction you can have with professors and students at a U.S. university. MOOCs offer good insight, but it's not the same as the American classroom.

Connections: Any final thoughts on MOOCs for our EducationUSA advisers and international students?

McGann: MOOCs are really cool; it is an amazing thing that not only MIT, but lots of institutions, are doing to leverage technology to open up the best of what we do at no cost. This is a special time in higher education and it's awesome to see it happening. For students that are excited about this type of challenge and have the access, it might be worthwhile to take advantage of this opportunity and learn something along the way.

MIT's OpenCourseWare by the Numbers

Founded in 2002, OpenCourseWare (OCW) is MIT's groundbreaking initiative that publishes course materials online and makes them available to the world for no cost. Here are some impressive stats:

- **125 million:** number of visitors to the OCW site to date.
- **2,150:** number of MIT classes that make course materials, including syllabi, reading lists, and lecture videos, available on OCW.
- **40%:** percent of OCW users that report using resources to explore areas outside their field.
- **80%:** percent of visitors that rate OCW's impact as extremely positive or positive

Source: MITOPENCOURSEWARE website. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Web. May 23, 2013. <http://ocw.mit.edu/about/site-statistics/>

The MOOC Metamorphosis of Online Education

By Raisa Belyavina

Feature

Over the past year, Raisa Belyavina, Senior Research Officer at IIE, has followed MOOC developments with an eye on the implications this new online education phenomenon may have on U.S. institutions and international education. Below, Ms. Belyavina addresses several emerging themes to watch and poses questions to consider as the MOOC metamorphosis continues to take shape. Don't forget to click on the hyperlinked text for more resources!

While online education is itself not a new phenomenon, the intersection of education technology and entrepreneurial ventures investing in education are changing the landscape of online education as we know it. With access to higher education continuing to be a perennial challenge in the 21st century, new models of online education are emerging as alternatives to traditional brick-and-mortar higher education institutions. Alongside for-profit online education institutions such as the University of Phoenix and online degrees offered by traditional colleges and universities, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have dominated the discussion around new frontiers of online education. MOOCs are free online courses available to anyone, anywhere in the world with an Internet connection. There are a number of [major MOOC providers](#) and [new entrants who are making inroads](#) into the MOOC market. MOOCs have generated both high hopes and ample skepticism in high education circles. They also invite both practical and philosophical questions for the future of higher education.

How will MOOCs (and the increasing availability of free educational content) shape the higher education landscape in the second decade of the 21st century and beyond? Will MOOCs provide more value for institutions or translate to losses in tuition dollars? Will free online education options mean more access to higher education for students around the world or will emerging for-profit models squeeze out the very students who could stand to benefit the most? How will MOOCs change the role of professors and what it means to be a student in an era of online education? And finally, what impact—if any—will MOOCs have on traditional international student mobility: will students be just as motivated to cross borders as courses become more readily available online?

As we follow the developments of MOOCs and the metamorphosis of online education from discreet to open-access models, here are three key themes to watch.

Monetizing MOOCs

While MOOC enrollments have climbed exponentially in the past year, turning a profit from a model based on free access has proved to be challenging. [MOOC providers are still figuring out exactly how to make money](#). Coursera, one of several MOOC giants, has announced that it will [charge students who want to get certificates for course participation](#) and has also introduced a profit-generating but contentious model of [selling student contact information to prospective employers](#) (with permission from course participants).

Universities that are spearheading online education efforts (including Harvard and MIT) have allocated millions of dollars in support of MOOCs. What remains to be seen is whether MOOCs will eventually contribute to institutional bottom lines or become for-profit ventures.

Accreditation

Accreditation will continue to be a hot topic as MOOCs expand and begin to carve out their niche in the higher education landscape. In February 2013, the American Council of Education (ACE) [deemed five MOOCs worthy of academic credit](#). While ACE's recommendations on the credit-worthiness of MOOCs moves these online courses in the direction of approval by colleges and universities, MOOC providers are also pursuing alternative credentialing routes such as [certificates for course participation](#). Partnerships between MOOCs and educational institutions, such as the one announced by [San Jose State University and Udacity](#) earlier this year, will also pave the way for MOOCs to offer academic credit for students. Several Udacity courses have been [approved for credit by San Jose State](#), and will cost students a mere \$150 per course. Time will tell whether accreditation, institutional partnerships or certificate programs will make MOOCs an integral part of credential-driven higher education or a stand-alone education alternative with its own credentialing system. We might see MOOC diplomas or MOOC joint degrees in the years to come. Or we may find that MOOCs accommodate our continuing education needs more than addressing the challenges of access to higher education.

MOOCs and Pedagogy for the 21st Century

There's no question that MOOCs have made institutions (re)consider the future of higher education, [provoking debates](#) about the intersection of education and technology. Do MOOCs have the potential to overcome access challenges associated with prohibitive education costs in the U.S. and [institutional barriers in developing countries](#)? Or is the profit motive likely to breed fierce competition among education provider institutions that will extinguish the free MOOC movement? And what will become of pedagogy in the 21st century: [Will professors become celebrities, salesmen, or get sidelined](#)?

This article was adapted from a post that appeared on the [IIE Blog](#).

Raisa Belyavina is Senior Research Officer for the Institute of International Education's Center for Academic Mobility Research.



MOOCs are dependent on the advancement of educational technologies to revolutionize access to higher education across the globe. The acquisition of knowledge and skills via these technologies is the fundamental goal of 'eLearning,' and new channels for sharing expertise on any subject, at any time and virtually anywhere, continue to open. The use of educational technology can also result in a higher return on investment than the traditional alternatives, putting pressure on public organizations, private corporations, and academic institutions alike to save costs by adopting it in their own classrooms and training programs.

EducationUSA faces the same pressure as it must continue to reach and advise more students under constrained budgets and resources. Through webinars, chat rooms, blogs, videos, podcasts, and social media, EducationUSA advisers around the world have actually been accomplishing eLearning on a massive global scale. In fact, *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* is essentially a MOOC, as it was developed using eLearning courseware and is delivered to students around the world via the Internet and CD-ROM. During the 5 steps, the advisee is guided by electronic information and visual prompts to learn about the U.S. admissions process, with access to both live and on-demand **webinar sessions** that concentrate on subsections of each step in greater detail. In addition, a **toolkit** was developed to compliment *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* and provide EducationUSA advisers with eLearning resources for their virtual outreach.

Using Educational Technologies in Advising

In the field, several EducationUSA advisers have already taken advantage of various educational technologies in their advising centers. Here are a few examples:

Venezuela: After attending a senior EducationUSA adviser training program in 2006, **Michele Lee** decided to use eLearning to advise more students in neighboring cities and states across Venezuela. In the past, Michele was only able to reach these areas once a year, which in turn only created a need for additional services. By using the free, open-source **Moodle** learning management system (LMS), Michele has been able to offer a range of on-demand tutorials that help these students select the right U.S. college or university and write a personal statement.

"eLearning tools have the advantage of allowing you to reach an audience you might normally not be able to reach due to time or geographic constraints" says Michele. "With today's busy world, eLearning permits the connectivity of people at a different time and place."

Michele also notes that eLearning is "not a substitute for face-to-face advising, though it is a powerful tool for those advisees we cannot meet in person." Therefore, her center must also rely on social media, email, and Skype to follow up with advisees. She has also experimented with the free online conferencing system 'WizIQ' to advise students one-on-one.

Michele believes that; "As an EducationUSA adviser, eLearning provides an additional tool to service people at their own time and convenience. Advisees can connect at anytime and any-

where. In turn, this has allowed us to offer online follow ups and answer questions."

Iran: Beginning late last year, **Soraya Eftekhari** has been offering eLearning courses hosted on Moodle LMS as well. She uses courseware from the **Adobe e-Learning Suite**, such as Presenter and Captivate to organize and present information, and she engages her advisees through Moodle discussion forums and Adobe Connect webinars.

"My LMS, webinar program, and eLearning courseware have become essential tools for my advising efforts" says Soraya. "In Iran, the current political relationship with the U.S., coupled with government censorship of the Internet, has made it very difficult for me to conduct outreach and advising. Educational technology like this allows me to overcome so many barriers, and I am advising far more students than would otherwise be possible - even without the benefits of a physical center located in the country."

Soraya has modeled her courses around *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study*, and uses materials from the **5 Steps Toolkit**. "The 5 Steps Toolkit materials, such as PowerPoint files and quizzes, gave me a head start on my courses" says Soraya. "I simply added these materials to my course pages on Moodle as learning activities, and I use Moodle discussion forums to answer questions from students."



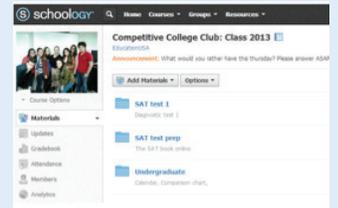
Soraya currently has more than 340 Iranian students participating in her eLearning courses, and she hopes to seek assistance from other Iranian students now studying in the U.S. to help her manage the system and lead discussions. “I like the idea of peer-to-peer mentoring, and eLearning offers the perfect platform to facilitate this,” she adds.

Mexico: **Sofia de la Garza** has been using another free LMS called **Schoology** over the past year to follow up with her one-on-one advising sessions. She likes the Schoology platform because it has a very social design, resembling something more like Facebook than a virtual classroom. It also allows her to contact educators from around the world for advice, and it offers a wide range of eLearning exercises and tools that are ready to use.

“I think there is a very powerful effect when the students feel like a ‘class’ instead of going through the process by themselves” Sofia says. “They are in a group of students having the same experiences as they do, even though they have never seen each other in person.”

However, she also admits that eLearning requires students to be more independent as they need to access the course page regularly and keep up with assignments. Moving forward, Sofia plans to build her eLearning activities into preparatory courses for **Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study**, allowing students to continue with the application process at their own pace on the EducationUSA website.

Although her platform is still under development, Sofia believes that eLearning “has great potential to reach a wider audience outside my city, where there are excellent students with the disadvantage of not having an EducationUSA center nearby. I think eLearning is a way to put the internet reach to good use, to use it as a tool to offer the information to bright students no matter where they are.”



To get started on your own eLearning projects, there are a couple of things you should consider. For instance, a Learning Management System (LMS) will help you deliver eLearning content and provide different tools to help you create activities. As noted in the examples above, both **Moodle** and **Schoology** are popular choices as they are free of charge. **Adobe Connect** can also be used as an LMS to store your eLearning content and deliver it through live and on-demand webinar sessions.

Several different course development software programs are also available on the market. For instance, the 5 Steps Toolkit was developed with **Adobe Presenter**, a PowerPoint plug-in that allows you to bring audio, video, interactive menus, branching scenarios, and quizzes to your slide presentations. In turn, they can be published

for use in webinars, a website, an LMS, or other offline formats that do not require internet access.

There are many LMS and eLearning software options out there, and educational technology is a growing industry. Options can range from free to very expensive, so do your research and decide what makes the most sense for your advising center. For more information and guidance, you may also visit the EducationUSA eLearning discussion forum at www.educationusa.info/e-learning/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=26.

Rick O'Rourke is Global Communications Coordinator for EducationUSA at the Institute of International Education.

Featured Center: Dhaka, Bangladesh

An interview with EducationUSA Advisers Arefin Jahan

Arm Chair Tour

EducationUSA Advisers: Arefin Jahan

Territory: Bangladesh

Number of Advising Centers in Country: Two

Number of Employees: There are four employees, including the adviser, receptionist, counseling technician, and outreach program coordinator (currently vacant).

Years of operation: 30+ years at the American Center
6 months at the EMK Center

Level of study that advisees pursue: Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D.

Most popular field of study for advisees: Engineering, sciences and business

Number of visitors in a year: 17,486 visitors in 2012

Services offered at center: Reference library, current test prep study guides and CDs for TOEFL, IELTS, SAT I & II, GRE, GMAT and USMLE, seminars on various topics, workshops on GRE and SAT I, individual counseling, sending EducationUSA Weekly updates to students

Website: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov/advising.html>



EducationUSA Adviser Arefin Jahan

Please describe your EducationUSA office.

The EducationUSA Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh is located at the American Center (the Public Affairs section) of the U.S. Embassy. Center staff includes one adviser, one student counseling technician, one outreach program coordinator and one receptionist. The center is supervised by the Cultural Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy, Bangladesh. Every month, EducationUSA arranges various programs to help students prepare for the U.S. admission process. In addition to hosting two weekly information sessions for local students on undergraduate and graduate studies, the Center has also started hosting workshops with tips and strategies for the SAT I, GRE and TOEFL. We are also about to launch basic advising sessions through a conference call system in three American Spaces located outside Dhaka. EducationUSA Dhaka also reaches students by sending weekly event updates through a student database, which currently contains more than 5,000 students.



EducationUSA Dhaka team from left to right: Asmery Boiragee (Receptionist), Arefin Jahan (EducationUSA Adviser), Mahbuba Khanam (Counseling Technician)

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Please describe the strategy for opening a second advising center in Dhaka.

EducationUSA at the Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) Center started offering advising services in January 2013 and enables us to reach a new and larger population of students. Its prime location in the cultural and educational hub of the city provides students easy and convenient access to EducationUSA facilities. It is currently staffed by one part-time adviser.

In what ways have you integrated the “Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study” into your advising practices?

EducationUSA Dhaka at the American Center and EMK Center have initiated StepWise, a series of five activities that help students better understand the U.S. admissions process, step-by-step. Activities include:

- **Activity 1:** Informs students of the timeline, application process, and required documents.
- **Activity 2:** Guides students through the process of searching for universities and programs based on a set of criteria. In this phase, the adviser assigns homework to make the individual advising session in the next step more productive.
- **Activity 3:** This is the research phase, during which students meet with the Adviser individually to finalize college selections.
- **Activity 4:** Students prepare for the required standardized tests.
- **Activity 5:** During this final stage, students prepare and send completed application packages to their chosen institutions.

The StepWise process helps students form a connection to EducationUSA and enhances the level of service advisers provide.

In what way does your Center reach out to local schools?

Once a year, we meet with 50 local school and university guidance counselors, administrators, teachers, and professors to discuss U.S. higher education. The Center provides assistance in creating school profiles and keeping participants up-to-date on the U.S. admissions process. EducationUSA Dhaka can assist local institutions connect with U.S. counterparts through our extensive contact network. We have also started hosting webinars with U.S. institutional representatives to help local students better understand the admission process. Two weeks ago, we successfully completed our first webinar with Heidelberg University in Ohio on the MBA admissions process and scholarship opportunities for international students. Over 30 students attended and it was a big success! Moving forward, we hope to offer these on a quarterly basis.



The EducationUSA Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh is located at the American Center of the U.S. Embassy



The Center holds two weekly informational sessions for students on undergraduate and graduate studies in the USA.

An interview with Featured Student: George Sarkar

Name: George Sarkar

Age: 18 years

Home City and Country: Dhaka, Bangladesh

Name of U.S. Institution: Connecticut College

Major: Physics

How did you find out about the EducationUSA Center?

I found out about the EducationUSA Center when the center presented at my high school about 2 years ago.

About how many times did you visit the EducationUSA Center from the start to finish during your admissions process?

I visited the Center around 200 times.

What EducationUSA services did you find most helpful?

Initially, the seminars on applying to and studying at an American college, such as choosing the right college, writing a good admissions essay, picking the right major, selecting a proper location, searching for financial aid and scholarships, proved very insightful. Internet access was also valuable, especially to search for financial aid and the right institutional fit and. The most helpful resource was the opportunity to speak to an adviser one-on-one, which was not only important, but also maybe even a necessity.

What was the most useful information you learned from your EducationUSA adviser?

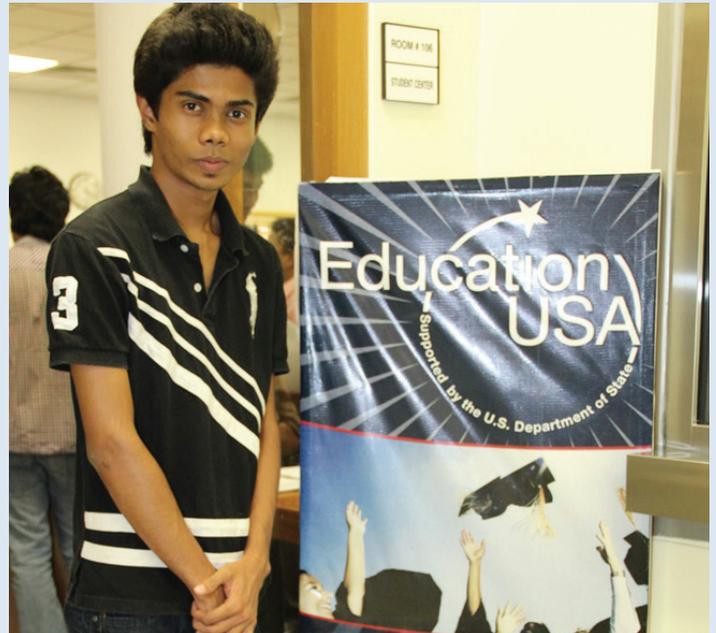
The most valuable guidance I received from my EducationUSA adviser was how to research and find a financial aid package for an international student hoping to major in science.

Will you keep in contact with your adviser?

I definitely hope to keep contact with my adviser because she is not only knowledgeable of the admissions process, but also about knowing how to remain in good academic standing throughout the college experience. I think her advice will be very helpful when I'm in the United States.

If you could have done one thing differently during your admissions process, what would it have been?

I would have taken the required tests (TOEFL, SAT, SAT II, and ACT) earlier to give myself more time to prepare and to maybe even take the tests a second time.



Will keep in contact with other students you met at the EducationUSA Center?

The students I met at the Center supported me throughout the admissions process and became good friends. I do not think I could have been successful in the admissions process without their help and hope to keep in touch with these friends as much as possible.

Do you have any advice for international students currently applying to study in the United States?

Start the admissions process early and take the time to explore all the options. There are a wide variety of colleges in the U.S. and each college is not for everyone. Finding the right fit and financial aid package is extremely important; however, this process can be time-consuming. Starting early will also give students enough time to prepare and take the required tests (TOEFL, SAT, SAT II, and ACT).

Spring EducationUSA Training Institute

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and Institute of International Education (IIE) hosted the 7th EducationUSA Training Institute from April 21 – May 4, 2013. The EducationUSA Training Institute is an intensive training and professional development program designed to provide EducationUSA advisers with the knowledge and skills needed to enhance their effectiveness and build professional competency.

The first week of training was held in Washington, D.C. In addition to workshops held at the U.S. Department of State and at IIE, Georgetown University and Northern Virginia Community College also graciously hosted a day of the training on their campuses. During the week, the advisers met with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Academic Programs, Meghann Curtis and had discussions with representatives of other Department of State bureaus and offices. They also had a detailed and productive conversation on the history and purpose of community colleges, and participated in workshops on higher education partnerships, counseling, strategic marketing, and strategic outreach.

The second week of training was held in Lexington and Georgetown, Kentucky and jointly hosted by the University of Kentucky, Georgetown College, and Bluegrass Community and Technical College. That week focused on direct exposure to international student life and services on university campuses. It included workshops sessions on undergraduate and graduate admissions; relationship building with the U.S. higher education community; public speaking; and a networking fair with over 16 other universities.

Participating in the Spring 2013 Training Institute were 18 EducationUSA advisers from the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Bosnia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Georgia, Germany, Honduras, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Nepal, Norway, Peru, South Africa, Thailand, and Vietnam. In addition to the DC-Based EducationUSA professional development staff, the training team also included two of the 14 Regional Education Advising Coordinators (REACs) – Maria Mercedes Salmon, REAC for North and Central Americas and the Caribbean, and Clara Priester, REAC for Africa South and East.

The Training Institute was a resounding success and the EducationUSA advisers left with a renewed sense of their contributions to U.S. public diplomacy and promoting U.S. higher education to potential students across the world. The EducationUSA professional development team, on behalf of the network, would like to thank all who played a part in making the program a success.

New Developments at EducationUSA

EducationUSA is pleased to welcome Allison Viescas to the REAC Services Team at IIE in Washington, DC as Senior Manager of Operations. In this new role, Allison will work on a broad range of administrative and financial management for the cooperative agreement, including organizing events such as the Forum. Allison, a Maryland native, has thirteen years combined work experience in not for profit program management, finance and administration. Over the course of her career Allison has worked as a financial analyst and administrator for organizations focused on improving the health, education, and social outcomes for people living at-risk domestically and abroad. In her most recent role, Allison worked as an operations manager for the World Resources Institute. Allison earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science with a minor in Mandarin Chinese from Bates College and a Masters of Public Administration with a focus on management of international, non-profit organizations from the New York University Wagner School of Public Service. Allison has experience living, learning and working outside of the U.S., in China, South Africa, Mexico and Brazil. Allison's email address will be aviescas@iie.org and her phone number +1 (202) 326-7819.



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EdUSA Connects: May - June schedule

EducationUSA will continue with *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study*, now on Step 5: Prepare for Your Departure, which will help students navigate their first moments in the United States with confidence! Session topics include adjusting to American culture and life in and out of the classroom while studying in the United States. Find the schedule below:

MAY 2013

May 10: **Adjusting to American Culture** (Grad)
10:00-11:00am (ET)
By: David Smith, Ohio State University

May 13: **In and Out of the Classroom** (Undergrad)
10:00-11:00am (ET)
By: Cathy Lee Arcuino, Pittsburg State University

May 14: **Adjusting to American Culture** (General)
3:00-4:00pm (ET)
By: Kevin Vicker, Eastern Illinois University

May 22: **Adjusting to American Culture** (Undergrad)
12:00-1:00pm (ET)
By: Timothy Tesar, Iowa State University

May 23: **In and Out of the Classroom** (Undergrad)
12:00-1:00pm (ET)
By: Sarah Sucher, DePaul University

May 24: **In and Out of the Classroom** (ESL)
3:00-4:00pm (ET)
By: Monica Jacobe, The College of New Jersey

May 29: **In and Out of the Classroom** (Grad)
12:00-1:00pm (ET)
By: Catherine Lockwood, Robert Morris University

JUNE 2013

June 4: **Adjusting to American Culture** (Grad)
12:00-1:00pm (ET)
By: Aimee Akimoff, Willamette University

June 5: **Adjusting to American Culture** (Undergrad)
12:00-1:00pm (ET)
By: Elizabeth DuMont-McCaffrey, Mount Holyoke College

June 7: **Adjusting to American Culture** (Undergrad)
10:00-11:00am (ET)
By: Angie Maffeo, University of St. Francis

June 10: **Adjusting to American Culture** (Undergrad)
3:00-4:00pm (ET)
By: Marie Whalen, Whitworth University

June 13: **Adjusting to American Culture** (Undergrad)
10:00-11:00am (ET)
By: Miriam Moeller, Northern Michigan University

EducationUSA Policy Scenario

What would you do if faced with the following advising scenario?

Scenario: You receive a request (by email, phone, or in person) from someone who would like you to put a link to their website about studying in the United States on your center's website. The person explains that they work for a nonprofit organization that shares the EducationUSA network's goal of providing accurate, comprehensive, and current information about how to apply to U.S. colleges and universities and that they think the free resources on their website will be useful for international students.

Analysis: There are many organizations that provide information to students about aspects of the U.S. higher education system and how to study in the United States. Some are commercial while others are nonprofit. Some charge money for their information, while others provide it free of charge. Regardless of any of these factors, you should explain to the person who makes the above request that EducationUSA centers refrain from listing specific references on their own websites. Rather, EducationUSA centers refer students to the main EducationUSA network homepage at educationusa.info or educationusa.state.gov. If the person insists and requests that we put their website on our main homepage, you should refer them to your REAC and/or program officer.

Policy Reference: The above scenario illustrates the EducationUSA policy guideline stating that advisers must "refrain from endorsing services provided by a company or organization in the areas of test preparation, admissions, placement, language training, or visa procurement."

Andrew Masloski is a Program Officer for EducationUSA at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State. If you are faced with a challenging scenario, please email your REAC or Andrew Masloski at MasloskiA@state.gov.

EducationUSA CONNECTIONS

Prepared by the Membership and Publications Division of the Institute of International Education

For questions, comments or submissions, please contact: Madeline Friedman at mfriedman@iie.org

Additional advising resources and past issues of *Connections* can be found at: <http://educationusaconnections.iienetwork.org>.



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