**Reflecting on Massive, Open Online Courses (MOOCs)**

TIME Magazine did a feature on MOOCs last fall (*“*College is Dead. Long Live College!” October 18, 2012), and I was very intrigued.  After reading the article, I signed up for a Udacity course that looked very interesting, but graduate classes took up all my free time for personal learning endeavors.  I would do a MOOC if I had the time for it.  I like the idea because I can pick a specific topic that interests me.  For example, I really like economics and statistics.  I don't like them so much that I would want to spend years of my life studying them, but I like how they impact our lives.  I would take a single course, so a MOOC is perfect.

**Advantages of MOOCs**

This specificity is one of the advantages.  MOOCs are also advantageous because they make learning more accessible, both geographically and economically.  In one article I've read, I learned that the majority of MOOC participants are international students, typically in developing nations.  MOOCs also encourage lifelong learning and continual personal/professional development.  This mindset of growth is important to a successful economy.

**Disadvantages of MOOCs**

The disadvantages of MOOCs have a lot to do with creation and interaction.  If the courses are mere videos of lectures, there isn't much of a difference than in a traditional classroom.  Access has changed, but learning hasn't.  There can also be a challenge with providing feedback.  Dr. Wilson has provided substantial feedback to the group of students in this online course (20?), but I find it hard to believe that she could provide the same level of timely feedback to a class of 1000.  Then again, the course is free, so you get what you pay for.

There appear to be two issues that MOOCs and universities will have to negotiate.  First, there is the issue of accreditation.  How will universities determine that a course meets the rigors of a degree plan?  How will universities insure that the student completed the work and has mastered the skills/content?  Second, the major arguments for MOOCs appeared to be cost/access-driven.  It was all about making education equitable.  While this is a noble and worthy goal, at some point, the shift will also have to be instructionally-driven.  Participants actually have to learn/understand/apply/create.

That being said---here are a few I'm interested in.  All are offered by Coursera.

Intro to Global Health; Big Data in Education; Copywright 4 Educators

There was one course that I was very interested in for my students. It is basically the collegiate version of the AP Language and Composition class:

Think Again: How to Reason and Argue (Duke University)