

Designing Learner-Centric MOOCs
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Lecture 05
Evolution of MOOCs

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Hello and Namaste. In this video, I will be briefly explaining about the evolution of Massive Open Online Courses or MOOCs as they are referred to.

Though there were universities and initiatives that focused on distance education much earlier, the arrival of internet in the 1990s had also brought in the opportunity for increasing access of education through online learning. The Alliance for Lifelong Learning, a non-profit initiative started by Oxford, Yale and Stanford University in 2000 is one of the earlier initiatives that tried to offer courses at scale through the online medium.

Soon, others had also joined similar experiments at multiple levels. An example is an individual effort by the Utah University Professor David Wiley who offered his semester course online. This had 50 participants from around 8 countries.

Some more examples of scaled-up initiative include the MIT Open Courseware, Lynda, Khan Academy, Stanford Online, Peer to Peer Network. But, the most widely talked about experiment in the massive open online course was the course 'Connectivism and Connective knowledge' offered by Stephen Downes and George Siemens in 2008.

The course was offered with the underlying philosophy of connectivism where learners work with distributed content using multiple technology features like content aggregation, wikis, and web pages to learn from each other.

The instructors had also provided additional learning resources like readings, web links, and audio summaries in the course page to close this learning loop. The course attracted 2200 participants worldwide.

The next big revolution in the online offerings came in the year 2011, when the Stanford University offered three courses online. One of it was the course 'Introduction to Artificial Intelligence' offered by Professor Sebastian Thrun along with Peter Norvig.

This attracted 160,000 learners with around 20,000 of them completing this course.

Professor Thrun went on to create a MOOC platform Udacity in the year 2012, an year that also saw the birth of the most popular MOOC platforms like Coursera, edX, Future Learn, Open HPI, Eli Academy etc.

India had also witnessed scaling up initiatives in the field of education during these years. With the Train 10,000 Teachers coming up with blended course offerings using its synchronous remote center model for content delivery and the National program on technology enhanced learning coming up with video repositories from professors of the premier institutes like IITs and IISc.

Thus, MOOCs had become a common word by 2012 and the advantages of these courses in terms of access and flexibility that it provides for learners along with the scales that it can reach were widely appreciated by everyone.