

Mar 16, 2015

## THE RISING TIDE

- By Anant Agarwal, CEO of edX

MOOCs have been a popular topic in the education industry for the past few years. As we stand in the midst of this decade, it's encouraging to evaluate how the online learning industry has grown and to predict future trends.

MOOCs have clearly been a game-changing initiative, and I see an overwhelming response from learners across all ages keen to engage more with online education. MOOCs have the potential to create massive prospects and opportunities for students, employers and educators. They are not only bringing education to more people, they are also tailoring the learning experience to meet the needs of tomorrow's students, universities and employers. As colleges and universities see the impact of MOOCs on learning, we'll see more blended classrooms incorporated into the curriculum. We'll see student satisfaction levels rise, along with professors who will be freed to spend more time to collaborate with students and on research.

### **Game changer**

We'll also see the educational system become more efficient and deliver better outcomes for the investment; all of this aggregating to a reduced skill

gap. Some of the major trends that I expect will continue in the online learning space include:

More and more free MOOCs will allow for increased access to high-quality education. Students worldwide will have access to virtually any course subject in just about any language.

MOOCs will continue to deliver a personalised learning experience through evolving interactive technologies. Students will be presented with multiple learning pathways to navigate courses that fit specific learning styles and speeds.

Credentials will be reborn. Traditional credentials valued today will diversify, moving beyond the college degree as employers increasingly accept certificates for MOOC courses.

The blended model will continue to rise in popularity. College campus coursework will combine in-person and online learning; a shift driven by student demand for the convenience and effectiveness of online learning.

Leveraging online courses, higher education will occur not just over four years, but a lifetime. Students will become continuous learners, cultivating new skillsets throughout their careers.

In the near future, MOOC certificates will transfer to course credit in similar ways as AP credits and transfer credits.

MOOCs will be our new textbooks. These new “textbooks” will also include videos, game like simulations and interactive exercises, helping to enrich and expand the learning experience.

Increasingly, MOOCs will help better prepare students for college. Students and colleges will use MOOCs to help close the college readiness gap and ensure students are prepared for their next level of study.

MOOCs will be used in building professional capacity as well. Employees will be encouraged to take online courses with self-assessment preparedness tests in specific skill sets when hired. Additionally, professionals will use MOOCs to keep pace with emerging trends and technologies.

Growing institutions, especially in developing nations, will aggregate existing MOOC courses into synthesised programmes. These ‘digital dormitories’ may augment online learning by also providing students with a campuslike experience. Educators have long known that each student is an individual, with unique needs, talents and goals. And, we are in an exciting time as education is evolving to meet new student needs while maintaining its goals and mission.

***As colleges and universities see the impact of MOOCs on learning, we’ll see more blended classrooms incorporated into the curriculum.***