**Fostering Self-Direct Learning in MOOCs:**

**One Modest Little Study to Help Save the Planet**

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**Abstract**

While massive open online courses (MOOCs) were basically nonexistent slightly over a decade ago, today more than 100 million learners enroll annually in over 11,400 MOOCs from some 900+ universities. Unfortunately, most of these MOOC participants do not survive the first week or two of such courses. In response, our team at Indiana University has created and then tapped into a unique database of more than 3,000 MOOC instructors from around the planet to conduct a series of studies on MOOCs during the past few years related to personalization, cultural sensitivity, instructional design practices and challenges, pedagogy, career development, motivation, self-directed learning, engagement, and soon gaming. We have also completed a systematic review of the MOOC research since 2012. In this presentation, we intend to touch on the highlights of several of these research endeavors before focusing on a recent study of self-directed learning (SDL) skills. Using Garrison’s SDL model, this study purposefully examines instructors’ perceptions of SDL and their MOOC design practices to facilitate learners’ SDL. The data sources include survey data from 198 MOOC instructors, 22 MOOC instructor interviews, and a review of their 22 courses. Our study findings indicate that MOOC instructors believe that they can intentionally or unintentionally create a learning environment to facilitate students’ SDL. To help students with self-management, self-monitoring, and motivation, MOOC instructors use a variety of strategies such as helping students set their own learning goals, building learning communities, offering immediate feedback, embedding quizzes for self-assessment, providing progress indicators, inserting reflection questions, designing short learning units, offering flexible timelines, highlighting estimated time frames, and making available optional learning materials. In the future, adaptive learning systems, artificial intelligent systems, and learning analytics were expected to support SDL. Several suggestions for instructors, instructional designers, and MOOC providers will be offered in this session.