

Chapter 13

Flipped Classroom Approach to Incorporate MOOCs as Micro-Credentials Into Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Micro-credentials, which signify the attainment of particular skills, have attracted considerable interest due to their adaptability, alignment with industry requirements, and congruence with lifelong learning endeavors. While encompassing various types, micro-credentials are often linked with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Despite the increasing number of MOOCs and the rising enrollment of students acquiring micro-credentials, there is a challenge regarding the recognition of these micro-credentials within formal educational contexts. At this stage, the Flipped Classroom (FC), which involves both online and in-class phases, could present a suitable approach for integrating micro-credentialing into formal educational contexts under the guidance of course instructors. Accordingly, the aim of this chapter is to advance a conceptual proposal for acknowledging and recognizing MOOCs as a source of micro-credentials within the context of higher education environments while accounting for the intricate interactions among micro-credentialing, MOOCs, and the FC approach.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of skills acquired at the end of the educational process has become evident, alongside awarding diplomas based on educational outcomes in higher education (HE). There is an emphasis on the future of the job market being measured by skills rather than diplomas; in other words, the preference lies in skills rather than degrees (Kasriel, 2018). Although the function of HE extends beyond skill acquisition, enabling students to adapt to the workforce and effectively utilize the knowledge and skills acquired during university education is one of its objectives.

In recent years, micro-credentials that indicate the acquisition of specific skills or competencies have garnered attention because of their flexibility, alignment with industry needs, and compatibility with lifelong learning initiatives. According to the European Union (2021), a micro-credential denotes the accomplishment in learning that a learner has gained after completing a concise period of learning. Such short learning opportunities, like abbreviated courses leading to micro-credentials, facilitate the focused attainment of abilities and proficiencies tailored to a rapidly evolving society and job market, serving as supplements to conventional qualifications without displacing them. The extensive and swift expansion of micro-credentials in various forms, durations, assessment methods, and delivery modes poses challenges for their recognition in educational, training, or employment contexts (European Training Foundation, 2022). Primarily, micro-credentials are situated outside the formal qualification frameworks. However, these frameworks offer formal direction, as learners typically seek transparency and relevance of micro-credentials to formal qualifications (McGreal & Olcott, 2022). Hence, the acknowledgment of micro-credentials within formal educational procedures holds significance.

There exist various categories of micro-credentials, each validating learning, skill acquisition, or competencies through an accepted assessment method. Certain certificates merely confirm attendance and are not classified as micro-credentials. However, specific badges grounded in competencies may meet the criteria for micro-credentials if they authenticate learning and are connected with a dependable assessment procedure (McGreal & Olcott, 2022). Micro-credentials are frequently associated with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) (European MOOC Consortium (EMC), 2020). The expansion of MOOCs over the span of ten years culminated in a peak of 19.4 thousand MOOCs available in December 2021, offered by around 950 universities globally (Shah, 2021). Despite the increasing number of MOOCs and the rising enrollment of students acquiring education and micro-credentials through MOOCs, there exists a challenge regarding the appropriateness, assessment, and recognition of these micro-credentials within educational contexts. When the importance of various qualifications isn't obvious, students in universities might hesitate to get their extra learning recognized. Likewise, employers might find it

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