

TLC ROUNDTABLE NOTES
Thursday, December 6, 2012

Attendees:

Vic Catalano
Karen D'Agostino
Dara Evans
Ave Latte
Brian McKeon
Mike Qaissaunee
Phyllis Shafer
Jane Simeca
Ron Sopenoff
Ashley Tasy
Joe Varone
Linda Wang

Norah welcomed the faculty to the Roundtable. The topic for discussion: Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC). Norah began the discussion noting the headline from a *New York Times* article titled "Year of the MOOC" and asked how Brookdale could possibly leverage MOOCs. She turned the meeting over to Larry to facilitate the discussion.

Larry picked up the conversation explaining that a MOOC is a type of online course that is free with no credit given for successful completion. World class professors at universities including Harvard, MIT, Stanford, and Princeton are working with leading companies offering MOOCs. There are no entry requirements and Larry's research shows that the completion rates are "abysmal." Most of the courses originally offered were in the technical and science fields for students wishing to build a knowledge set. Now more social science and humanities courses are being offered.

The following points were discussed:

- There can be 10s of thousands of students worldwide in one course.
- Some schools give certificates upon completion after an exit test.
- Material is graded by course members.
- MOOC providers are making plans to offer credit and charge fees for certificates and proctored exams.
- Students vote on questions they want the instructor to answer.
- Outcomes and assessment are not part of a MOOC.
- The three leading companies offering MOOCs are Coursera, Udacity and edX.
- Courses can run from five to ten weeks.

Larry noted that completion of a course could provide an employer with information about new skills the employee may have gained through a MOOC. Mike Quassaunee reported that someone he knows got a job at Zagat after taking two intro courses and is now continuing to learn online with MOOCs to increase his knowledge base and skill set for the job. Mike continued noting that there are degree people that can't do a particular job and a practical skill, as Joe Varone agreed, learned through a MOOC, can be important to keeping a job.

Vic Catalano pointed out that someone taking a MOOC could be interested enough to go on to take a credit course at a college or university.

Larry continued noting that BCC already offers non-credit courses through OBCD. He and several other faculty questioned if you had a choice, would you take a MOOC from Brookdale or Princeton. He also explained that you are not a Princeton student but a student in PrincetonX.

Jane Simeca introduced the idea that a MOOC could be used to fulfill continuing education credits that are required in some professional fields to maintain licensure.

Joe Varone brought up online class caps and using the MOOC model in our system. Why can't we do 100 students? Why can't they grade themselves? Joe doesn't see this working for a typical BCC student.

Norah noted that Ocean County College does not have full time faculty teaching online courses. Supposedly, the adjunct faculty agreed to have 10,000 students in a course which would be self-paced and graded in the background. Using this model, OCC could offer courses in China.

Linda Wang inquired about faculty compensation and noted that this type of course would probably work best with the mature student who is more engaged in learning.

Karen D'Agostino suggested that some of the faculty should take a MOOC to familiarize themselves with this innovation in education. Then they will have a better idea of what BCC could do with these types of courses. Larry added that evaluation and assessment are real problems. Most students take noncredit courses for the love of learning. Brian McKeon continued noting that these courses are taken because of the flexibility needed and completion rates are much lower than face-to-face courses.

Mike noted that MOOCs are in their infancy and should improve with time. Finger printing and retinal scanning can be used in the future for student identification to avoid cheating. MITx is doing research on new approaches to teaching and learning.

Larry noted that Brookdale was offering telecourses 20 years ago, similar to the MOOCs, that consisted of 45-minute lectures and produced a 50% completion rate. Norah added that completion rates improved when online courses included interaction between student and instructor.

There was a question about whether the administration is well informed about online classes. It was suggested that Norah get on the agenda of the Board of Trustees to showcase the "best of the best" in distance education here at Brookdale. It was also suggested that students attend the Board meeting and take part in the discussion on distance education.

Ave Latte suggested a Brookdale MOOC could be developed to help students transition from high school to college, something similar to the First Year Experience offered here for credit. Many faculty noted that the students need to be better prepared for the college experience.

Another question arose as to whether Brookdale faculty could “pluck”, for example, a lecture from a MOOC being offered by one of the companies. It was decided that this would not be able to be done because of copyright issues, ethical questions, etc. It was suggested that students could register for a particular MOOC and then listen to the lecture or presentation that was assigned by the Brookdale instructor and use it as supplemental material to the Brookdale course.

Norah concluded by thanking everyone for the excellent discussion and she will pursue a presentation to Brookdale’s executive leadership.