

MOOCs in a young Applied Sciences University: Participants' behavior and metrics

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1. ABSTRACT

This paper presents the global MOOC experiment conducted by the University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland (HES-SO) since 2013. It shows how a young institution with a mainly local anchorage has taken hold of this new teaching approach. The HES-SO MOOC system is described after having been introduced worldwide and in Switzerland. Thereafter, the participants, their behavior and their requirements are highlighted with the help of metrics consolidated from the MOOCs presently provided on the dedicated platform.

The HES-SO MOOC platform offers six MOOCs reflecting the variety of domains in which the HES-SO provides expertise: Public Speaking, Hypertension, Comics Drawing, Mental Health, Sustainable Finance and Teaching at the digital era.

Other Moocs are under development on topics such as bridging courses in financial mathematics, digital transformation of firms, digital marketing, or various forms of written communication.

About 45 % access by mobile device (40% mobile phone, 5% tablet) and 55% by desktop computer. If 59% subscriptions to the platform are registered via an internal HES-SO address, there are only 7% to attend a MOOC. 41% subscriptions to the platform are outsiders to the institution (or their connection takes place via a private address) and represent 93% of the course subscriptions. 28% still attend the course actively by the last week and at the end of a MOOC, 23.5% of the active participants obtain a certificate for successful completion or attendance.

On average, participants access a MOOC, on Mondays and Tuesdays (20.45% and 15.45%) preferably between 12:00 and 16:00 (34.23%) and in the evening between 17:00 and 22:00 (30.76%).

A questionnaire was sent to participants at the end of each MOOC, in order to collect their opinion. 10% returned the questionnaire. To the question item "Overall did this MOOC meet your expectations?", 99% of the participants answered "yes". 100% claimed that the MOOC content was interesting. More surprisingly, 98% wished a MOOC level 2 on the same topic.

The paper presents more detailed metrics and concludes how strongly the support from the rectorate is required when launching the production of MOOCs, in a top down logic. Financially, but mostly strategically, such courses must carry the vision of the educational approach the institution wishes to sustain. Moreover, the teaching teams are insufficiently prepared to produce distance courses.