

Research on the Transformation and Innovational Development of Adult Education in Newly-built Undergraduate Institutions in MOOC Age

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Abstract: The advent of MOOC age is exerting a profound influence on the adult education in China. This research is based on the investigation of the current development status of adult education in the newly-built undergraduate institutions in Shandong province. It analyzes in detail the opportunities and challenges faced by adult education in MOOC age and probes into the issue that how to realize the transformation of the adult education in MOOC age from MOOC+ flipped classroom teaching mode, the transformation of teachers' functions, the construction of MOOC learning service platform, and the innovation of MOOC development and application, etc. It provides a useful reference for the innovation of adult education in newly-built undergraduate institutions.

1. MOOC AGE: A Global Educational and Teaching Revolution Doomed to Come

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), which means “large-scale open online courses”, refers to the latest online course development models that have emerged in recent years. Started in 2011, like a wave, the “MOOC” quickly swept across the field of education and teaching in the world, evolving into a new model of higher education worldwide. 2012 was called “the first year of MOOC”. Later, the introduction of MOOC into Chinese education has brought unprecedented challenges to traditional higher education in China, as well as great opportunities for innovation and development (Wang Ying, 2014; Ren Youqun, 2014). How to adapt adult education to this change and accelerate the innovation and sustainable development of adult education has become a new topic that must be seriously considered by higher education workers.

2. Investigation on the Development of Adult Education System in Newly-built Undergraduate Institutions in Shandong Province

According to the learning characteristics of adult students, the research group conducted a questionnaire survey on adult colleges and continuing education colleges in 12 newly-built undergraduate institution in Shandong province. Based on two groups of in-service teachers and adult students, the research group conducted a survey on the understanding, acceptance, current situation of application, opening hours and future prospects. The analysis of data shows that more than 85% of teachers have more or less understanding of the concept of “MOOC”, while nearly 70% of students do not know what “MOOC” is. More than 90% of teachers are willing to integrate teaching ideas and methods and learn to master the skills related to MOOC, while nearly 50% of students believe that MOOC will not be very helpful to their studies and exams, and only nearly 30% of students think it is helpful. For the use of MOOC in adult teaching, the results are similar. More than 73% of teachers and students agree that “online independent learning + weekday guidance, discussion, homework in class + online & offline assessment” will be conducive to learning effect. For the opening hours of MOOC, more than 45% of teachers and students hope it to be open all day long, so that learners can acquire knowledge at any time, and more than 30% think it should be synchronized with the teaching plan. More than 82% of teachers and students are

optimistic about the future development of MOOC. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that although MOOC has made some progress in adult education in newly-built undergraduate institutions in Shandong, as a new way of education and teaching, MOOC still has a long way to go at the level of teachers and learners.

3. The Educational Storm: Opportunities for Adult Education in MOOC Age

3.1 The Rich Resources of MOOC Courses are Conducive to Saving the Teaching Cost and Promoting the Fairness of Adult Education.

As a large-scale open online course, MOOC covers high-quality educational resources in almost all disciplines. Currently, there are mainly 8 comprehensive MOOC learning platforms in China, including Chinese University MOOC, Online School, EWANT Open Education Platform and Tsinghua Union, etc. The courses of MOOC can be studied without limit, which effectively reducing the cost of curriculum resources development in adult education. At the same time, due to the large amount of low-cost, even free, high-quality curriculum resources, adult learners can obtain the most needed knowledge to improve themselves with the minimum investment. In this way, MOOC optimize the allocation of educational resources, greatly narrowing the educational gap between regions and groups, and effectively ensuring the fairness of adult education.

3.2 MOOC Breaks through the Space and Time Limitations of Adult Learning Style and Helps to Increase the Students' Number of Adult Education.

According to MOOC's *Creative Sharing Agreement*, anyone can participate in a large number of online courses at a low cost or even for free. Learners are independent of space and time, and break through the limitations of training scale and enrollment. A variety of flexible forms, such as short micro-class teaching and convenient mobile app services, greatly meet the needs of adult learners at different levels. The diversity and openness of teaching process and content effectively solve the time and space limitations of adult learners, and improve the students' number of adult education.

3.3 MOOC is Learner-centered, which is Conducive to the Achievement of Individualized Learning Goals.

According to their own development needs and learning levels, adult learners can break through the barriers of traditional face-to-face teaching mode. According to the differences in learning basis, they choose suitable learning content and enjoy the high-quality resources of world-class universities. In MOOC age, adult learners no longer learn mechanically, but actively build their own knowledge system on the basis of active cognition and interpretation of knowledge. In this way, their learning is characterized by diversity, sociality and development. No matter for what purpose, adult learners can find suitable courses in MOOC to meet the needs of individualized learning and development.

3.4 MOOC Conforms to the Worldwide Trend of Information Networking, which is Conducive to Deepening Adult Education Reform and Promoting Education Cooperation.

The emergence and rapid development of MOOC is the product of the global information network. The large-scale and open online education that MOOC shows conforms to the development of the times and provides a valuable opportunity for deepening the reform of adult education. The unique teaching methods and contents of MOOC, as well as its multi-dimensional and individualized teaching features, guide people to review and think about the goals, contents, means and modes of adult education in China, and continuously promote the reform and development of adult education. Meanwhile, the rapid development of MOOC has also greatly promoted the development of online education enterprises in the network age, and steadily formed the modern adult education operating mechanism based on the market operation mechanism. In addition, the effective construction of MOOC platform can greatly promote the smooth development of regional cooperation and inter-school cooperation, jointly build an optimal MOOC and realize resource sharing.

4. Rational Thinking: The Challenges Faced by Adult Education in Newly-built Undergraduate Institutions under the Background of MOOC

4.1 Traditional Adult Education is Brought to Impact, and the Learning Effect is Questioned.

Traditional adult education is relatively single in teaching mode, teaching content and teaching methods. It is teacher-centered and students receive knowledge passively. In MOOC age, teaching activities of adult education will change from traditional teacher-centered to learner-centered, and adult learners must take the initiative to build their own knowledge system. This process enhances learners' autonomy, but the learning process faces challenges. Due to the gap between learners' literacy and the requirements of MOOC and the adaptability of MOOC, the learning effect of adult learners is sometimes difficult to be guaranteed and is questioned by others.

4.2 Practical Operation Ability becomes a Short Board for Adult Learners.

Due to the wide range of MOOC courses, it is difficult to guarantee the actual teaching effect only by online learning for majors and courses with high operational requirements. Adult learners have their own distinct characteristics. Most of them have rich practical experience and are very clear about what kind of knowledge they need to improve. This characteristic requires that adult teaching should be more flexible. Adult learning has a clear purpose and serves its own work and life. However, in MOOC age, all courses are teaching on the Internet, which directly resulted in the disconnection between "learning and application". Some courses are not targeted, leading to a result that what adult learners keep in mind after finishing school is just empty theory knowledge, and they haven't effectively improved their professional practice ability, thus they fail to achieve the goal of accepting the adult education to serve their own career and life. Adult education in newly-built undergraduate institutions has a relatively short history, and MOOC lacks money input. As a result, the richness of courses is limited, and learners' lack of practical operation ability is more obvious.

4.3 Due to the Lack of Learning Service Platform Construction, the Sustainability and the Accuracy of Assessment are Questioned; The Identification of Adult Learning is Difficult.

Although MOOC is rich in courses, they are relatively scattered and do not build a complete professional knowledge system, which is not conducive to the systematic learning of adult learners. In addition, MOOC is still short of Chinese resources, and teachers' input in the learning process is limited. They mainly rely on adult learners and their peers, and MOOC is lack of systematic adult teaching service system. None of the continuing education colleges of the 12 newly-built undergraduate institutions involved in the research provides MOOC online learning or related links for adult learners. The construction of MOOC courses is still in the initial stage of development, and the construction of supporting learning service platform needs to be improved. On the other hand, among the few authoritative MOOC learning platforms in China, few of the courses clearly explain the value and significance brought by the courses' learning objectives, innovative knowledge and future career prospects. Because the content presented in the learning page is much the same, adult learners tend to feel that what they have learned is not what they need to learn and sometimes the learning is interrupted due to the difficulty of the course. In the course development, due to the need for a large-scale development team, the development process of MOOC should also pay attention to adult learners' learning characteristics. Therefore, whether the teachers of newly-built undergraduate institutions have enough time and energy to design and develop adult education courses, whether there is sufficient technical and fund support and how the use effect is, etc., all these should be tracked and researched continuously, then it can improve the resources developed.

In terms of course assessment, there are three main assessment forms: Test, Peer Assessment and Machine Assessment. No matter which kind of way, there is a certain degree of subjectivity and uncertainty. In addition, given the networking of the testing process, it is difficult to effectively guarantee the one who is an adult learner is also a tester. To a certain extent, there are doubts about the accuracy and authority of the assessment. Another issue is how to identify adult learning achievements in the study of MOOC. Although there is a certificate of a major or skill, it is difficult

to provide adult learners with credits and diplomas. In the current relatively utilitarian educational environment, how many adult learners can stick to it?

5. Taking Advantage of MOOC: To Achieve the Rapid and Sound Development of Adult Education in Newly-built Undergraduate Institutions

5.1 To Adopt Flipped Classroom to Construct a New Adult Teaching Mode.

The emergence and application of flipped classroom in the past decade has provided useful references for us to construct a new classroom teaching model for adults (Yang Wei, Liu Yanzhu, 2017). Flipped classroom teaching model can organically combine class-based teaching with individualized development and maximize the individualized teaching of learners, which is consistent with the learning characteristics and social roles of adult learners. In the flipped classroom, adult learners can freely schedule time, use the Internet to learn what they need and form a study group with teachers and classmates in the classroom to have a face-to-face discussion. In this way, they can gradually construct the “personal MOOC learning + receiving information and thinking + class discussion and inter-group communication + teacher summary + understanding and application + assessment and feedback” learning mode. This learning mode not only saves teaching time, but also enriches the forms of classroom and after-class teaching & studying and improves the teaching efficiency.

5.2 To improve the interactive system and speed up the construction of learning service platform of MOOC.

According to the characteristics of adult learning and the nature of work, the construction of interactive system of MOOC should be improved to enhance the communication and interaction between teachers-students and students-students during the learning process, and effectively promote the application of adult learners' knowledge and the improvement of their skills. While improving the interactive platform for learners, we should also attach importance to and strengthen the construction of MOOC learning service platform. Through the questionnaire survey, interview and other forms, we can know the preferences of adult learners. In the construction of the platform, relevant courses related to their own majors, especially the present situation of adult learners' career development and future career development prospects, should be clearly summarized and introduced, building a major-curriculum guidance-preschool guidance system. In this way, adult learners can evaluate their own level, objectively judge their learning acceptance ability, and effectively avoid the blindness of course selection in MOOC. During the process of the course, attention should be paid to after-class review and consolidation, and systematic services such as discussion, guidance, practice guidance, academic examination and assessment should be provided for learners. The construction of MOOC learning service platform will effectively reduce the unsustainable situation of adult learners' in med-term. MOOC can cater to adult learners of different levels. For those with higher needs, special channels can be created to provide targeted in-depth guidance. For some professional fields with broad development prospects, special courses can be “privately customized”.

5.3 To Cooperate and Innovate the Development and Application Mode of MOOC for Adults.

In the context of a society in which the state encourages a number of colleges and universities, especially the large number of newly-built institutions, to transform themselves into application & technology-oriented universities, we should strengthen the mutual cooperation between the MOOC system, society, enterprises and universities, actively build the interlocking and interactive “MOOC platform-enterprise-adult learners-career planning and development” mode. After that, every links should be integrated, each advantages can be complemented. Society and enterprises are the inexhaustible sources of MOOC system's development. Only when the needs of the society and enterprises are fully taken into consideration can MOOC be a lasting course resource that truly meets the needs of the society and different levels of adult learners. Meanwhile, strengthening the

cooperation between MOOC and enterprises will greatly improve the professional environment of adult learners and provide a platform for enterprises to cultivate excellent talents. On this platform, adult learners can directly or indirectly participate in enterprises' technology development and transformation, product development and upgrading, foreign trade knowledge consolidation and updating, equipment care and maintenance, etc. These activities not only meet the needs of enterprises for specific talents in specific positions, but also help enterprises to innovate management ideas and development patterns, learn from advanced models at home and abroad, and fully realize the job satisfaction and pride of adult learners.

In addition to the aspects mentioned above, the orderly development of the adult education in MOOC age should also take the following aspects into account. For example, the creation of a "Credit Bank" system, which aims at effectively realizing the curriculum connection, mutual credit recognition and diploma granting between different universities and adult educational institutions, and breaking through the bottleneck of qualification certification; the establishment of a virtual adult learning community with discussion and communication, online assessment, management feedback and other functions, which aims at improving adult learning effects; making up for shortcomings in practice and accelerating the transformation of adult education in newly-built undergraduate institutions. Moreover, by using the advanced network technology and multi-media, MOOC, face-to-face teaching and field-study interactive learning mode can be organically integrated and a practical teaching system is established, providing adult learners with various forms of field training to ensure the quality of adult learners learning, promote the competitiveness and innovation of adult education institutions in the field of adult education.

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