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Article for Perspectivas

> Article in Spanish **here**.

#MassEducation:
From Design 101 to Architecture 101

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"I wouldn't have seen it if I hadn't believed it." Marshall McLuhan

1. What is a MOOC?

"MOOC" stands for: Massive Open Online Course.

An online course open to all, meaning that anyone with an access to internet can attend the course for free. MOOCs are usually offered on websites specifically designed for displaying didactical contents such as video-lectures, readings, assignments and further inspirations. Then, there are the "forums" for discussions, dedicated places in which students and teachers can exchange thoughts and ideas, ask (or answer) questions, start or join conversations.

The MOOC phenomenon started in the United States a few years ago. The most well-known MOOC providers are Udacity, edX and Coursera. Ranging from S to XL, studies have shown that the average MOOC enrolls a bit more than 40.000 students.

Let's proceed.

2. Some Good and Bad Points of MOOCs

> Good point no.1: Learn Anything
From experiencing Malaysian architecture to songwriting or programming, game theory to the science of gastronomy, there is a MOOC for it. You can now tailor your own personal curriculum based on your own personal will and interests.

> Good point no.2: Learn Anywhere
At home, on the bus, at a friend's house or by the beach, physical space is no longer a barrier for attending your course. All you need is an internet connection and a device to access the web.

> Good point no.3: Learn at Anytime
Manage your own schedule, follow the lessons at night, on weekends, before breakfast or whenever you wish to do so. The former (learning) boundaries once set by "time" have now disappeared!

> Bad Point no.1: Limits of the Virtual World
MOOCs live in the virtual world and no virtual education will ever replace the traditional education model. At best, education should mix both the physical and the virtual worlds. Real-life meetings and interactions between students and teachers are necessary for a number of reasons, sometimes visible and other times invisible.

> Bad Point no.2: "Interior" Design
MOOC platforms are not designed for interactions. While they are not "social", learning is (or should be) a social activity. Designed only a couple of years ago (in times of Facebook and Twitter), these platforms were already outdated.

> Bad Point no.3: From an Economic Point of View...
The cost, time and energy required to make / run a MOOC can be very high and in many cases is not financially sustainable.

3. Why are MOOCs special?

> They are new
The world of MOOCs is new, scary and everyone who is involved in it, from teachers to students to institutions or investors, is risking and experimenting. Experts don't exist in this fascinating MOOC world and it is a great opportunity for teachers and designers to test and explore new boundaries. Whether we like it or not, we have entered a world in which online education quickly becomes more and more present. A world in which the "conventional" languages used to transfer knowledge need to be rethought. This is extremely special and interesting.

Or as R. Buckminster Fuller would say: *"Don't fight forces, use them."*

4. What is Design 101?

> A MOOC on iversity
Together with Stefano Mirti, Giulia San Gregorio and other wonderful people, we designed and ran Design 101 on iversity.org, a new German-based MOOC platform. Offered by the Abadir Academy of Design and Fine Arts in Catania, Italy, the course started in October 2013 and

ended in February 2014. Although our team had been exploring online education for a few years already, Design 101 was our first MOOC.

> A Journey into Contemporary Design
For 101 days, the Design 101 team travelled the world sending students daily emails with a video-postcard and pdf letter introducing a brief. One exercise per day for a total of 101 days, and a series of references to books, movies, songs and all sorts of other curiosities.

> A Community of People From All Over the World
In numbers: 42.895 students enrolled in Design 101 on iversity.org, 10.025 started the course, 629 completed it, 350 asked for the certificate of completion, 300 submitted works for the final party / exhibition in Berlin, 100 made it all the way to Berlin for the final show (from Tokyo to Tooele to Porto Alegre), 7 came to our summer camp in Syracuse (Sicily), 3 came for a summer internship and 1 is now working with us.

On social media: 6.743 likes on the Design 101 Facebook page, 2.936 people in the Design 101 Arena (our Facebook group), 1.437 followers on the @design1o1 Twitter account and 1.524 pictures with the #design1o1 hashtag on Instagram.

> Day 98
At some point during the course, students asked us if they could become the teachers for a day. This is what happened on day 98. Our students became teachers and they did it perfectly. To understand what I mean by this, you can easily find "Day 98" on our Design 101 archive (design1o1.net), an impressive archive made by 3 students of ours last summer. Day 98 was a turning point for us leading to...

> A Second Round (by the Students)
We are preparing a second round of Design 101 that will start in July 2015. This time, the 101 days will be spread over a period of 6 months, divided into 3 courses of 2 months each. The goal is to set up a team from our former Design 101 students and have them prepare and run the class by themselves. New rules to follow, old ones to break and further missions to accomplish.

:-)

6. Getting ready for Architecture 101

Architecture 101 is our latest MOOC project for iversity and will start in January. Over a period of 6 months, the 101 exercises will be divided into 3 courses of 2 months each: From Nothingness to Place / From Place to Space / From Space to Architecture.

We are working on a new format for the course. One made especially for smartphones. Our videos and pdf lectures will be shorter and adapted to Instagram (a social media we will be using a lot). Students will be able to make their exercises "on-the-go" as the given tasks will require very little material. Shorter, quicker, extra fun: very exciting.

7. Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out

"Today, we know that time travel need not be confined to myths, science fiction, Hollywood movies, or even speculation by theoretical physicists. Time travel is possible. For example, an object traveling at high speeds ages more slowly than a stationary object. This means that if you were to travel into outer space and return, moving close to light speed, you could travel thousands of years into the Earth's future." Clifford Pickover

Ready? Steady? Go!

Will you join us?

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