IJoL International Journal of Librarianship

Learning Cataloguing and Classification: Is It on Popular Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) Platforms?

Adebowale Jeremy Adetayo
Adeleke University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria

Abstract:
The paper explores if cataloguing and classification (CAT/CLASS) can be learnt on popular MOOC platforms and what can be done if nonexistent. Different MOOC platforms were explored with a concentration on EdX and Coursera. Literature on MOOCs was examined, and findings were reported. It was observed that some library science courses are available on MOOC platforms. However, no CAT/CLASS courses are available on EdX or Coursera. The majority of their library science courses did not cover the technical service aspects of librarianship. As a result, recommendations were made on how library stakeholders can play proactive roles in introducing CAT/CLASS to MOOC platforms. This is one of the first papers to examine the subject of CAT/CLASS on MOOC platforms.

To cite this article:

Adetayo, A. J. (2023). Learning cataloguing and classification: Is it on popular Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) platforms? *International Journal of Librarianship, 8*(3), 103-110. https://doi.org/10.23974/ijol.2023.vol8.3.286

To submit your article to this journal:

Go to https://ojs.calaijol.org/index.php/ijol/about/submissions

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LIBRARIANSHIP, 8(3), 103-110.

ISSN: 2474-3542

Learning Cataloguing and Classification: Is It on Popular Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) Platforms

Adebowale Jeremy Adetayo

Adeleke University, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The paper explores if cataloguing and classification (CAT/CLASS) can be learnt on popular MOOC platforms and what can be done if nonexistent. Different MOOC platforms were explored with a concentration on EdX and Coursera. Literature on MOOCs was examined, and findings were reported. It was observed that some library science courses are available on MOOC platforms. However, no CAT/CLASS courses are available on EdX or Coursera. The majority of their library science courses did not cover the technical service aspects of librarianship. As a result, recommendations were made on how library stakeholders can play proactive roles in introducing CAT/CLASS to MOOC platforms. This is one of the first papers to examine the subject of CAT/CLASS on MOOC platforms.

Keywords: MOOC, Coursera, EdX, Cataloguing, Classification, Library science

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, Library Science (LS) is an indispensable program. This is due to the importance of libraries in the development of students in schools and citizens in communities. The library not only gives a place to study but also an atmosphere in which to succeed (Adetayo, 2022). Libraries in tertiary institutions are critical to the success of any accreditation effort. That is one of the reasons I decided to take the program. The program covers indexing and abstracting, library administration, library organization, records management, electronic information resources, research methods (Learn, 2020), and carrying out various library services such as reference, serial, circulation, technical service, and electronic services, among others. My experience in school with colleagues revealed that the technical service aspect, notably CAT/CLASS, was deemed to be the most difficult of the courses attended. Many students eventually learn it on the job rather than in school.

After graduating from library school, I was determined to improve my library science skills. CAT/CLASS were two skills I needed to work on. This was essential since one could have to work in the library's technical service division. So, I went online and looked for MOOC classes that would help me expand my abilities in CAT/CLASS, such as using cataloguing tools, descriptive and subject cataloguing, and so on. Library standards were also a vital aspect

to learn including RDA (Resource Description and Access), IFLA's bibliographic concepts, Library of Congress Classification and Library of Congress Subject Headings.

I chose to download certain MOOC platforms, such as EdX and Coursera, to my phone. I searched the app for CAT/CLASS but came up with nothing. I also looked for specific aspects of CAT/CLASS, but the results did not match what I was looking for. I was astonished because, even though MOOCs advertise themselves as huge, there was nothing on the platforms that could educate about such a core part of librarianship. Similarly, I searched for the courses on YouTube and found some results, but none of them was excellent enough to truly teach CAT/CLASS courses, as MOOC does for other programs.

Although I was subsequently able to obtain certain training links from the Library of Congress (LC) websites, such as Catalogers' Learning Workshop, LC's BIBFRAME, and Sinopia (Library of Congress, 2022), it was nevertheless unexpected that CAT/CLASS were not available on MOOC platforms.

Need for Professional Development Opportunities in Library Technical Services in Africa

Library technical services are the backbone of library services in Africa. These services constitute the acquisition, CAT/CLASS of library materials. It is so essential that everyone with a degree in library science is required to do the course, particularly in Nigeria. CAT/CLASS, which is the technical service of interest, constitutes being skilled in different CAT/CLASS tools. In Nigeria, most library schools restrict their practical teaching of CAT/CLASS to AACR2 (Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules), with most graduates not conversant with RDA (Resource Description and Access). This means that graduates would not be able to perform their duties effectively based on RDA rules which precisely represent the relations among entities and provide clearly bibliographic description to e-resources.

Also, some library science graduates find themselves working in an academic law library, which is different in its content, organization and use from other types of academic libraries. Most law libraries in Nigeria make use of Moys Classification Schemes (John-Okeke, 2017) different from LCC commonly used by academic libraries in Nigeria. However, Moys Classification Scheme is also not taught practically in most library science schools in Nigeria, making most graduates ill-prepared for the law library thereby forcing them to learn on the job. The reason for this is that the practical training in library schools is often limited to LCC. These are the reasons why there is a need for professional development opportunities in library technical services in Africa.

Collaborative Possibilities in Africa

Some collaborative opportunities in Africa are geared towards knowledge acquisition. One such opportunity was when the Nigeria Library Association signed a memorandum of understanding with the Polish Library Association a few years ago. The Memorandum created an opportunity for one Nigerian librarian to visit and understudy selected polish libraries every year (Idiegbeyan-Ose et al., 2016). Such memoranda should be signed with other Library Associations, which could afford many more librarians the opportunity to understudy established libraries around the world.

To further expand the collaborative model between the Nigeria Library Association and Polish Library Association, it is essential to look at ways of broadening the scope of this partnership. One way to achieve this is by partnering with more library associations across the

globe. This will create more opportunities for knowledge exchange and acquisition between librarians in Africa and established libraries worldwide. By partnering with other associations, more African librarians can gain access to a broader range of resources and expertise. Moreover, expanding the number of participants involved in the study visits can significantly impact the number of librarians who can benefit from this program. At indicated above, only one librarian gets the opportunity to visit and understudy selected libraries in Poland. Expanding the number of participants in the program will increase the number of librarians who can benefit from the experience and knowledge acquired during these visits.

Conceptualizing MOOCs: Are They Really Open (Free) to Anyone?

Dave Cormier coined the term MOOC in 2008 in response to Connectivism and Connective Knowledge courses (Bozkurt et al., 2016). MOOC is an abbreviation for Massive Open Online Course. It is an online course designed for large-scale participation and open internet access (Kaushik, 2020). At the beginning of MOOC, the courses were completely tuition-free and some assumed that the 'open' meant tuition-free because they were delivered free at that point. However, as time went by with a lot of people making use of MOOC platforms, the most popular MOOC evolved into a freemium model. The first items to be converted from free to pay were certificates. Then the graded assignments were placed behind a paywall. All the main MOOC providers now have some courses entirely paid for. Therefore, MOOCs can be termed today as being open to anyone and not necessarily free from charges. There are several MOOC platforms available, including Khan Academy, Udemy, FutureLearn, Udacity, Open Education Europa, and The Open University. Regardless of the transition, MOOCs provide several advantages over traditional classroom-based approaches. The advantages of any-time learning, peer interactions on online forums, blended learning, instructor feedback, global exposure to a diverse group of learners, and inclusivity make them potentially significant change agents in higher education and employment (Friedman, 2013).

This article will, however, concentrate on two prominent ones: EdX and Coursera. This is because these two are from reputable universities. Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology founded edX in 2012. It includes a large variety of practical courses that help students study at a distance. Coursera is a platform developed by two Stanford professors in 2012. It includes many practical courses that help students shape their future (Roshi, 2022).

What Library Science-Related Courses are Available on EdX and Coursera?

There are a couple of library science-related courses on MOOC platforms. North Carolina University offered a MOOC called metadata in 2014. In 2018, Duke launched a Coursera MOOC on "copyright for educators and librarians" and "copyright for multimedia." EdX has some librarianship courses relating to public library systems which were delivered by the University of Michigan such as identifying community needs for public library management, managing a diverse and inclusive workplace for public libraries, personnel management for public libraries, budgeting and finance for public libraries, infrastructure management for public libraries, strategic planning for public libraries, grant writing and crowdfunding for public libraries, and public library marketing and public relations. There are also a few library science courses on other MOOC sites. However, none deals directly with CAT/CLASS which is core to the profession. Also, Sawant (2017) compiled a list of non-library and information science MOOCs useful for LIS professionals and students in fields such as management, technology, marketing, and research.

Why is Cataloguing/Classification Missing?

I decided to investigate why CAT/CLASS courses aren't available on major MOOC platforms. After investigating, it was not clear why it was not included. One possible explanation for this may be the difficulty of delivering this content in an engaging and interactive manner. CAT/CLASS can be complex and technical topics and may require a significant amount of hands-on practice to master (Snow & Hoffman, 2015). However, with the right instructional design and use of technology, it is possible to create engaging and interactive learning experiences that can help learners develop the skills they need to become proficient in CAT/CLASS.

Additionally, there may be a lack of demand for CAT/CLASS courses on MOOC platforms. While there is certainly a need for individuals with these skills in the library and information science field, there may not be as much demand for these skills outside of that industry. As such, MOOC platforms may not see these courses as a high priority especially given the evolution of MOOCs from fully free to a freemium platform over the years (Johnson, 2019; Shah, 2017), it would not be surprising if CAT/CLASS is omitted for commercial reasons. Libraries are not profit-oriented institutions with a measurable return on investment. This could be part of the reasons for the omissions. A financial profit-oriented strategy for MOOC platforms, which contradicts what some understand 'open' to be (i.e., making learning free), makes it difficult to build products that do not generate significant revenue for the organizations.

Despite the current absence of CAT/CLASS courses on MOOC platforms, there is still a great need for individuals with expertise in these areas. It is important for the library and information science community to continue advocating for the inclusion of CAT/CLASS courses on MOOC platforms and to develop innovative approaches to deliver this content to learners.

What Can be Done for Inclusion?

CAT/CLASS are too vital to be left out on popular MOOC platforms. To change the status quo, library associations, well-established libraries, library schools and library professionals and educators have a role to play.

Library Associations: Library associations can take the lead in contacting major MOOC platforms to educate them on the benefits of including CAT/CLASS within their course offerings. They can persuade them that there are potentially thousands of people who would join the course. Every country in the world has library schools with many students studying library and information science who would use their platforms to access the course. Furthermore, library professionals may be found not just in libraries but also in other businesses where information and knowledge are managed. Library associations should also encourage their members to participate in the development of CAT/CLASS course for MOOC platforms. They can also serve as a conduit for connecting MOOC platform administrators with library science professionals who can assist in the design of CAT/CLASS courses. These and many more are the roles library associations would have to take.

Established libraries: Although some efforts have been to get libraries involved in MOOCs, one of which was the OCLC conference which discusses library engagement in MOOCs in three categories: 1) copyright clearance and the location of alternatives such as Creative Commons content and other free sources; 2) course creation; and 3) the implementation of best practices and policies (Pagore & Chalukya, 2020). However, despite well-established libraries

such as the Library of Congress having outstanding training programs on their website, there are no courses on CAT/CLASS on prominent MOOC platforms. Libraries, such as LC, can collaborate with MOOC platforms to get part of their CAT/CLASS training done on the platforms. Their contributors can also sign memorandums of understanding with the platforms to get acknowledged for their work. This should also be done by other libraries that offer quality training that can be put to MOOC platforms.

Library Academics and Professionals: There are many library academics and professionals who are doing their quota by teaching CAT/CLASS on YouTube and other social media platforms. However, this is not always as high-quality and well-organized as MOOC platforms. These professionals can collaborate with MOOC platforms to plan their instruction in a way that simulates real classroom education. MOOCs would make learning easier since they incorporate the use of text, videos, and tasks to ensure that learning has occurred. Certificates would also be given out at the end of the course. MOOC models would be extremely beneficial to students.

Library Schools: Library faculties' staff should link up with other colleagues that have a presence on MOOC platforms. Since these colleagues have already worked with some of these platforms, they would be well-informed about how to go about having a CAT/CLASS presence on the MOOC platforms. This will ease the process of getting on the platforms.

Open Education Resources (OERs) Consideration

Open Education Resources are becoming increasingly popular in the world of education. They are defined as freely accessible, openly licensed documents and media useful for teaching, learning, and assessing, and for research purposes (UNESCO, 2019). This definition highlights the purpose of OERs, which is to make education accessible to everyone, regardless of their location or financial situation. As a result, various OER platforms such as OpenStax, OER Commons, and OpenLearn have been developed.

While OERs and MOOCs share some similarities, they differ in several aspects. MOOCs are typically structured courses with a specific start and end date, while OERs are self-contained educational resources that can be used independently or as part of a course. MOOCs often have a fee associated with them, while OERs are typically free to access (Ramirez-Montoya, 2020; UNISA, 2023).

Library CAT/CLASS courses are often missing from popular MOOC platforms, but OERs offer a potential solution to this problem. By providing self-contained educational resources, OERs allow students to learn at their own pace, without the constraints of a structured course. This can be particularly useful for library CAT/CLASS courses, as it allows students to focus on specific aspects of the subject matter, without being required to complete an entire course. The potential of OERs for library CAT/CLASS education is significant. By providing free and open access to educational resources, OERs can make education accessible to individuals who may not otherwise have the means to access it. Furthermore, the modular nature of OERs allows for a customized learning experience tailored to the student's specific needs.

Models for Incorporating CAT/CLASS Into MOOCs and OERs

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in incorporating LIS courses into MOOCs to provide wider access to these essential topics for learners worldwide. Several models have

been proposed to guide the development and delivery of MOOCs that effectively integrate CAT/CLASS into their curricula.

One such model, proposed by Tsabedze (2021), consists of four phases: analysis, design, development, and evaluation. This model aims to provide a framework for developing and delivering library and information science courses that are relevant, accessible, and affordable for learners in Eswatini. The analysis phase involves identifying the target audience, their needs and preferences, and the expected learning outcomes. The design phase involves creating a syllabus, selecting appropriate resources and materials, and designing assessment tasks that align with the learning outcomes. It also involves selecting the appropriate MOOCs platform and OER materials, as well as developing a quality assurance framework and a communication plan. The development phase involves developing the content, activities and materials for the LIS courses using MOOCs and OER. It also involves testing and validating the courses for functionality, usability, and accessibility. The evaluation phase involves assessing the effectiveness and impact of the MOOC and OER, using feedback from learners, instructors, and stakeholders, and using the results to improve the MOOC in future iterations.

In another article, Tsabedze and Saulus (2022) proposed two strategies for integrating MOOCs in LIS education: flipped classroom and blended learning. These strategies can be useful for incorporating CAT/CLASS courses on MOOCs. The flipped classroom strategy involves using MOOCs as a pre-class activity to provide learners with the basic concepts and theories of CAT/CLASS. This allows learners to engage in more in-depth discussions, exercises, and projects during face-to-face sessions, which can deepen their understanding of CAT/CLASS. This strategy can enhance the learner's motivation, interaction, and collaboration while reducing the instructor's workload and increasing the efficiency of classroom time.

However, the blended learning strategy involves using MOOCs as a supplementary resource to complement existing CAT/CLASS courses offered by higher education institutions. Learners can access MOOCs at their own pace and convenience, using them to reinforce or extend their learning of CAT/CLASS topics. This strategy can enhance the learner's autonomy, flexibility, and diversity, while increasing the quality and variety of CAT/CLASS content and materials.

In summary, the incorporation of CAT/CLASS into MOOCs requires careful planning, design, and implementation using appropriate models and strategies. These efforts can increase the accessibility, affordability, and effectiveness of LIS education for learners worldwide.

CONCLUSION

Library Science is an essential field that plays a significant role in providing quality library services, particularly in Africa, where technical services are the backbone of libraries. However, graduates of library science programs often lack adequate training in critical skills like CAT/CLASS, leaving them ill-prepared for the job market. Despite the potential benefits of MOOCs, such as anytime learning, peer interactions, blended learning, instructor feedback, global exposure to diverse learners, and inclusivity, MOOCs do not currently offer sufficient resources to learn these crucial skills. Although MOOCs have evolved from being entirely tuition-free to adopting a freemium model with some courses behind a paywall, library stakeholders must ensure that CAT/CLASS is made available on popular MOOC platforms. This approach will enable learners to acquire and sharpen their skills and prepare them for the professional world. Therefore, it is critical that library science schools and stakeholders

collaborate to identify the skills gap and design appropriate MOOCs to fill it, ensuring that library science students receive comprehensive training and exposure to new technologies and best practices in the field. This way, they will be better equipped to face the challenges of providing quality library services to meet the ever-growing information needs of their users in the 21st century.

References

Adetayo, A. J. (2022). Building civic engagement in smart cities: Role of smart libraries. In *Handbook of Research on the Role of Libraries, Archives, and Museums in Achieving Civic Engagement and Social Justice in Smart Cities* (pp. 314–333). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-8363-0.CH017

Bozkurt, A., Keskin, N. O., & Waard, I. de. (2016). Research trends in Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) theses and dissertations... *Open Praxis*, *8*(3), 203–221.

Friedman, T. L. (2013, January 13). *Revolution Hits the Universities*. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/opinion/sunday/friedman-revolution-hits-the-universities.html

Idiegbeyan-Ose, J., Ifijeh, G., Adebayo, O., & Segun-Adeniran, C. (2016). New paradigms in cataloguing in the 21st century: A review of implications and adoption of new strategies for Nigerian libraries. *Bilgi Dünyası*, *17*(1), 120–134. https://doi.org/10.15612/BD.2016.500

John-Okeke, R. (2017). Availability and utilisation of cataloguing tools and resources in university law Libraries in Southern Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Library and Information Science*, *5*(4), 128–135. https://www.academicresearchjournals.org/IJALIS/Abstract/2017/June/John-Okeke.htm

Johnson, S. (2019, February 26). *Much Ado About MOOCs: Where Are We in the Evolution of Online Courses?* EdSurge News. https://www.edsurge.com/news/2019-02-26-much-ado-about-moocs-where-are-we-in-the-evolution-of-online-courses

Kaushik, A. (2020). Literature on massive open online courses (MOOCs) and library and information science: An analysis. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-Journal)*. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/4210

Learn. (2020, August 25). *What Are the Courses in a Bachelor's of Library Science Degree Program?* https://learn.org/articles/What_are_the_Core_Courses_of_a_Bachelor_of_Library_Science_Degree_Program.html

Library of Congress. (2022, February 9). *Catalogers Learning Workshop (CLW), Program for Cooperative Cataloging, Library of Congress*. https://www.loc.gov/catworkshop/

Pagore, R., & Chalukya, B. V. (2020). Academic libraries and MOOCs era. In *Reinventing Academic Libraries*. Atharva Publication. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359392763_Academic_Libraries_and_MOOCs_Era

Ramirez-Montoya, M. S. (2020). MOOCs and OER: Developments and contributions for

open education and open science. In *Lecture Notes in Educational Technology* (pp. 159–175). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4276-3_10/FIGURES/8

Roshi, L. (2022, April 22). *EdX vs Coursera: Most Popular MOOCs Comparison (2022)*. Codeless. https://codeless.co/best-online-course-platforms/edx-vs-coursera/

Sawant, S. (2017). Non library oriented MOOCs useful for LIS professionals and students. *Library Hi Tech News*, *34*(9), 19–20. https://doi.org/10.1108/LHTN-05-2017-0032/FULL/XML

Shah, D. (2017, April 25). *MOOCs Started Out Completely Free. Where Are They Now?* Class Central. https://www.classcentral.com/report/moocs-started-completely-free-now/

Snow, K., & Hoffman, G. L. (2015). What makes an effective cataloging course? A study of the factors that promote learning. *Library Resources & Technical Services*, *59*(4), 187–199. https://journals.ala.org/index.php/lrts/article/view/5785/7250

Tsabedze, V., & Saulus, N. (2022). Efficiency of MOOCs in leveraging access and quality library and information science education in the era of COVID-19 in Eswatini. *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning*, *16*(1), 59–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/1533290X.2022.2035477

Tsabedze, V. wonderboy. (2021). MOOCs and OER: A model for library and information science education. *Internet Reference Services Quarterly*, *25*(3), 87–106. https://doi.org/10.1080/10875301.2021.1930621

UNESCO. (2019). *Open Educational Resources*. https://www.unesco.org/en/open-educational-resources

UNISA. (2023). *OERs & MOOCS - Open Educational Resources*. LibGuides. https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/c.php?g=355663&p=2399346

About the author

Adebowale Jeremy Adetayo is an academic staff of Adeleke University. His research interests are Information Science, Information Management, and Library Science. He has published many articles in reputable journals and is currently working on projects relating to library technologies. He has a PhD degree in library and information science.