# Using MOOCS (Massively Open Online Courses) to Develop Intentional CoP's (Communities of Practice) in Organizations

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## By Charlotte McCorquodale PhD
## From Ministry Training Source
## and Loyola Institute of Ministry

## To MOOC or Not to MOOC?

There is lots of talk these days about MOOCs (Massively Open Online Course) and the role they can have in a university or organization's learning strategy. Recently, the National Association for Catholic Youth Ministry Leaders (NACYML) sponsored a MOOC titled, "Encounter: Fostering a Culture of Encounter with Young Disciples." The MOOC had 1105 enrolled including a variety of Catholic youth ministry stakeholders from 10 countries representing 6 continents.

This paper will examine and demonstrate what was learned from this MOOC and how effective it was in helping foster a community of practice for the field of Catholic youth ministry, which was an underlying goal of the MOOC.

Additionally, the major learning elements within the MOOC will be examined including analytics for how participants engaged in various elements. A comparison of the results of a Week One MOOC Survey (n=117) and post-MOOC Evaluation Survey (n=169) will be included, as well as course registration information (n=1458) in order to understand why the learners participated and how they engaged in learning through the MOOC.

## Forming Communities of Practice (COP)

"Communities of Practice (COP) are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger, 2011.)" According to Wenger, they are everywhere. This definition of a community of practice definitely describes the 1105 people enrolled in the NACYML MOOC. They shared a common passion, as well as set of challenges regarding passing on faith to young disciples from emerging adolescents to emerging adults.

The MOOC leaders took Wenger's advice regarding how to cultivate these communities through various opportunities for professional sharing and learning. (Wenger, 2002.) This MOOC, as well as future MOOCs have become the key organizational strategy for fostering a community of practice from within engaged in ministering to young disciples. Wenger explains, "Rather than attempting to determine their expected value in advance, communities need to create events, activities, and relationship that help their potential value emerge and enable them to discover new ways to harvest it (Wenger, 2002, p. 60.)

The MOOC intentionally incorporated a variety of opportunities to encourage the formation of relationships and sharing of best practices including the synchronous weekly live sessions and the asynchronous NetSourcing Learning Communities (NLC) discussion forums. The focus on learning together and expanding the church's thinking, perspective, and experience in this critical area of encounter that is common to all stakeholders sharing faith with the young disciples

**About the NACYML Massively Open Online Course (MOOC)**

The NACYML MOOC was an international online learning event that was free for anyone interested in furthering their learning regarding fostering a culture of encounter with young disciples. NACYML hosted this learning experience for 1105 participants who are stakeholders in passing on faith to young disciples ranging in age from middle school through young adulthood. The vast majority of those registered were either parish youth ministry leaders (41%) or catechists (31%) followed by parents/guardians (25%) and parish staff (24%). Participants could select more than one role if it applied to them (see Chart 1: MOOC Participant Ministry Related Roles from Course Registration.)

MOOC stands for a Massive Open Online Course. For NACYML's MOOC, this meant the following:

> **Massive:** We had over 1,458 people registered in the MOOC from the 6 continents and over 10 countries with 1,105 registrants actually enrolling in the LMS.

> **Open:** The event was open to any adult, 18 and over, who wanted to learn more about fostering a culture of encounter with the young disciples in their family, their parish, school, diocese, organization or community.

> **Online:** The course took place online using the free version of Coursesites by Blackboard, Learning Management System (LMS.) All materials for the course were accessed through the Coursesites and links on the NACYML website, it is important to note that a number of parishes and dioceses (12% of those completing the MOOC evaluation) gathered people face-to-face in local settings to discuss insights gained from MOOC learning materials, often times these groups replaced for learners the online discussion in NLCs.

> **Course:** While this was not a conventional online course, it had a structured learning environment using the Coursesites LMS and common learning elements with an intentional instructional design to help learners grow and reflect on the course themes. It could be taken for CEUs but the vast majority of participants took it for personal and professional growth in order to advance their own knowledge and skills.

> **Theme/Focus:** The theme was "Encounter: Fostering a Culture of Encounter with Young Disciples." It is inspired by the first sentence of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* in which he writes, "The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus." Each week the MOOC explored one of the five chapters of *Evangelii Gaudium* in the context of a discussion on

*From a MOOC Learner: I'm taking the whole idea of encounter and relationships as a discussion to the rest of our staff. We are discussing how we can fire up our*

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how we foster a culture of encounter in our ministry with young disciples (NACYML, 2015.) In addition to NACYML, 23 different organizations were learning partners, who shared various learning materials and opportunities in the MOOC including 3 departments from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and four institutions of higher education.

A distinction has been made between two types of MOOCs. Bates (2014) explains, "there are two quite different philosophical positions underpinning xMOOCs and cMOOCs…. xMOOCs primarily use a teaching model focused on the transmission of information, with high quality content delivery, computer-marked assessment (mainly for student feedback purposes), and automation of all key transactions between participants and the learning platform. There is almost no direct interaction between an individual participant and the instructor responsible for the course. cMOOCs have a very different educational philosophy from xMOOCs, in that cMOOCs place heavy emphasis on networking and in particular on strong content contributions from the participants themselves."

Another way to see the distinction is by the learning theory that guides each type. The cMOOC model is based on the connectivism learning theory and xMOOC, on the behaviorism learning theory. The focus of cMOOCs is on knowledge construction and creation, putting emphasis on creation of new thinking, learner autonomy, and social network learning. xMOOCs are more traditional and focus on disseminating knowledge using common methods like teaching videos, assignments, and quizzes (Seimen 2012.) The most popular form is xMOOCs.

The NACYML MOOC was meant to be a hybrid of the two models by giving different paths of completion of the MOOC. It contained a traditional course format more like the xMOOC type but included the option for social learning in the Live Panel Sessions, via Social Media, in NetSourcing Learning Communities, and local learning groups (i.e. parish staff's, diocesan gatherings, youth ministry leader networks) who gathered to discuss the insights gained from course materials. A large emphasis in this MOOC was on the learning dialogue that would take place on this central issue of encounter that impacts all that pass on faith to young disciples. Part of the goal was to identify new strategies and best practices and to explore new ideas to help with our knowledge creation in this area. This was done both through the creation of content through the MOOC and through the learning dialogue's that took place.

## Who Participated in the MOOC?

The week one survey of 117 of the participants found that of those enrolled 77% were female and 23% male. They indicated by a majority (59%) that they choose to participate because of the overall topic and theme of MOOC. Only four percent were interested in CEUs. The majority of these participants had at least a bachelors degree with 37% having a graduate degree. Almost a third (31%) of the week one survey participants found out about this event through their diocesan leaders with another third (33%) finding out about it from a national organization, and 11%

finding out about it through social media. Social media ads where used on Facebook and a social media campaign was engaged to promote the MOOC. The majority of the MOOC learners (52%) had participated in an online course with 44% indicating that they had previously participated in an NFCYM youth or adult conference event.

**Chart 1: MOOC Participant Ministry Related Roles from Course Registration**

## Percent Who Identify as Specific Role
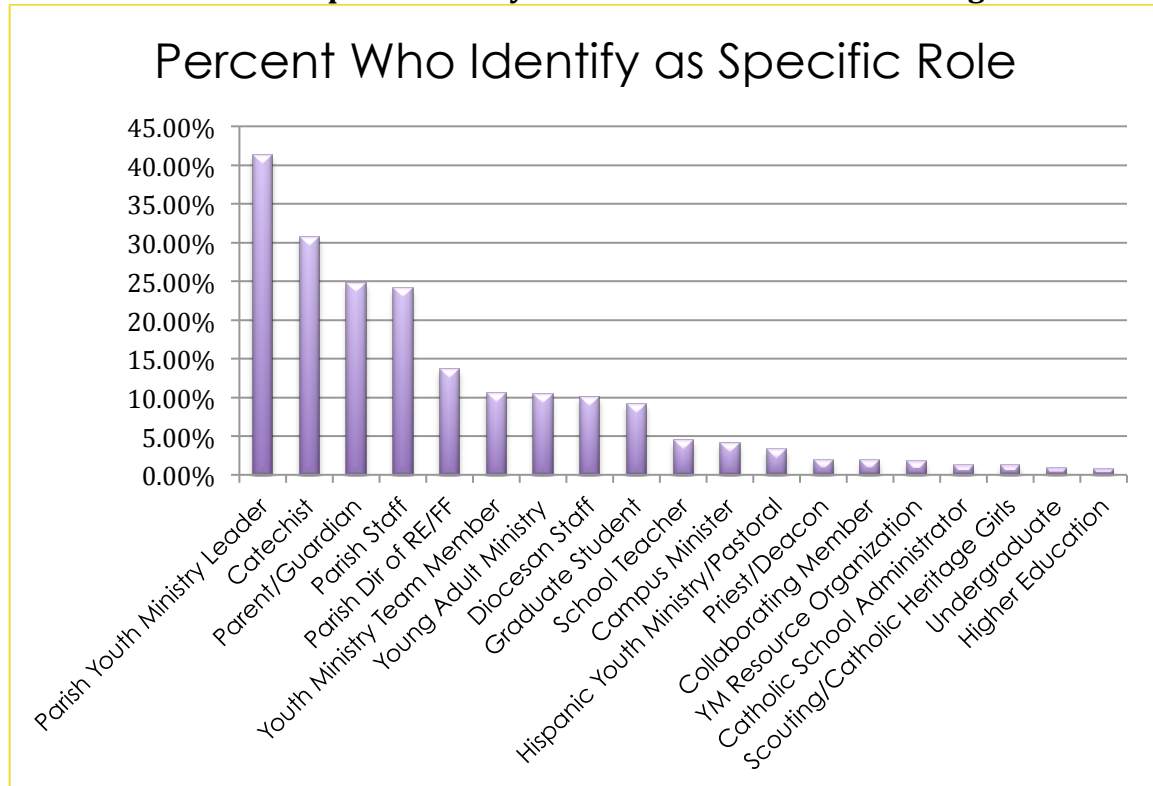


### Learning Elements of the NACYML MOOC

The MOOC Learning Week took place from Sunday to Saturday. The learning content for the upcoming MOOC Week was made available on Friday night at midnight before each week. The following core learning elements were included:

> **Read Chapter from *Evangelii Gaudium*:** Each week the Master Teacher reflected on one chapter from the apostolic exhortation. Learners reported something that attracted them to the course was the focusing of the course on the teachings of Pope Francis along with an opportunity to

*From a MOOC Learner, "The course pushed me to read "Joy of the Gospel." It is such a pleasure to hear what our pope has to say about ministry and how down to earth and real he is about our ministries. That has helped me be motivated and know that the top dog in our organization is right there with me and encouraging me. I look forward to looking for some of the panel experts materials and networking with some of our MOOCers (Appendix B.)*

intentionally read and reflect on *Evangelii Gaudium*. Sixty percent of those completing the evaluation indicated that they had read the chapter every week.

**View Master Teacher Videos:** Each week the master eachers shared their reflections on the weekly theme and chapter from *Evangelii Gaudium*. We were very blessed to have an inspiring and experience group of master teachers who shared their wisdom and expertise. The development and contribution of these videos to the free open source body of knowledge that surrounds Catholic youth ministry was an important part of the goal of fostering a community of practice. The total view count for all the master teacher videos was 3,928 times at end of the course (See Table 1.)

**Participate or View Expert Panel:** Each week the organization's leadership hosted live sessions taking place on the Tuesday at 1 and 9 pm Eastern. These sessions invited the master teachers and/or a live panel of ministry experts and practitioners to engage in a dialogue with live comments and questions from MOOC participants. The sessions were recorded for those who could not participate live and they also were part of the contribution of learning resources to the Catholic youth ministry and catechetical community. Live sessions were viewed a total of 2,728 times at the end of the course (see Table 1.)

**Reflect in the Learning Journal:** A weekly learning journal was provided for MOOC learners to help them reflect on applying the content from the course to their family and/or ministry context. It was designed to help learners name and integrate what they were learning. Those interested in CEUs from NACYML for their participation in the MOOC, were required to submit the learning journal.

**Weekly Themed Content from Learning Partners:** Each week the various learning partners shared a variety of additional resources, from theoretical to practical, to assist in helping learners further reflect on the theme and to utilize a variety of ministry resources in fostering encounter. The types of learning activities and resources included journal articles, videos for use with young Catholics, webinar recordings with various speakers, prayerful reflections, ministry ideas, and much more. Of those who engaged in the learning content provided by partners, 80% rated this content very good or excellent (see Chart 7.)

**NetSourcing Learning Communities (NLC):** For those learners interested in a learning experience that involved intentional dialogue with peers from a similar context regarding interaction with young disciples NLCs were formed and facilitated by trained facilitators. MOOC participants self-enrolled in the NLCs based upon their learning interests and could enroll in more than one community (see Appendix A for a complete listing of groups and hits.)

**How Did Learning Occur in a MOOC?**

Learners who are new to MOOCs, and who are not familiar with self-directed learning, often struggle to find their place within a MOOC. The majority of MOOCs require that the learner be self-directed and proactive in the learning process, which contributes to the low completion rates of MOOCs (Daniel, 2012). In the Week One Survey, 73.5% indicated they thought they were a self-directed learner and had joined a NetSourcing Learning Community (51%).

In MOOCs, like in other learning experiences oftentimes, what someone learns is based on how much effort they put into it. The MOOC facilitators recommended that learners set aside the time by blocking time on their schedule to learn and contribute to the dialogue. For this MOOC, it was assumed that individuals would have a richer experience, if they contributed throughout the course and if they interacted with other participants. This is one reason so much time and budget were dedicated to the NetSourcing Learning Communities. However, through the evaluation, it was found that the majority of participants only participated in the core learning activities such as watching the master teacher videos (71%), reading the document (62%), and participating in the live sessions (50%). Even with the different learning options provided, by the MOOC, still many had a positive experience and would participate again (see Chart 3.)

**Social Media and the MOOC**

A social media plan was developed for both promoting the MOOC and for delivering content and course reminders. Facebook ads were used to promote the MOOC and attributed for 11% of how those completing the Week One Survey heard about the MOOC. Additionally, each day of the five weeks of the MOOC a quote from *Evangelii Gaudium* pertaining to that week's theme was shared via Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, the MOOC had a Pinterest Board dedicated to sharing ideas related to fostering a culture of encounter with young disciples. Each week the course participants were encouraged to broaden the conversation by sharing on social media with their networks about what they were learning and experiencing in the MOOC. The hashtag #NACYMLMOOC was used by both course facilitators and participants over 300 times on the 3 social media applications (Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.) Sixteen percent of those who completed the evaluation indicated that they had shared what they were learning and experiencing with their social media networks.

**Learner Engagement and Motivation**

Koller, Ng and Chen (2013) denote the distinction between MOOCs "browsers" and committed learners, noting that "Committed learners, who tend to stay engaged throughout most or all of a class, can be divided into at least three partially

overlapping groups: passive participants, active participants, and community contributors:

- **Passive participants** engage with a MOOC predominantly through watching lecture videos, have limited participation on course forums, and typically attempt few assignments and quizzes (but may interact with in-video questions as needed to progress through the video content).
- **Active participants** engage in course content by completing homework assignments, quizzes, exams, and time-intensive programming or peer-graded assessments; they include the subset of "course completers" who do all the work necessary to earn a Statement of Accomplishment.
- **Community contributors** also actively participate in courses, but their specific means of interaction is through generation of new content, such as engaging in forum discussions or contributing foreign language subtitles."

Using this schema to examine participation in the NACYML MOOC, I would propose the following breakdown on participation based upon the data we have from both YouTube views and the LMS analytics:

- **Passive participants:** Average of 11% participation for the 5 Weeks. This participation level is defined in the MOOC as those who predominantly through watched master teacher videos and read the weekly *Evangelii Gaudium*. (The percentages were determined using the number of views of master teacher videos minus the number that participated in a live session that week.)
    - o Week One: 14%
    - o Week Two: 8%
    - o Week Three: Less than 1%
    - o Week Four: 17%
    - o Week Five: 13%
- **Active participants:** Average of 52% for the 5 Weeks. This participation level is defined predominantly through watching master teacher videos, reading of *Evangelii Gaudium*, and participating in the live panel sessions. (The percentages were determined using the number of views for each of the panel sessions each week.)
    - o Week One: 86%
    - o Week Two: 69%
    - o Week Three: 46%
    - o Week Four: 32%
    - o Week Five: 25%
- **Community contributors:** Average of 23% (N=252) for the 5 Weeks. This participation level is defined by how many of the 1,105 enrolled made one or more posts in the NLC Discussion Forums. Since participation in an NLC was required for CEUs they are included in this level of participation. Six percent of those who participated at this level received CEUs.

In the Week One Survey, 34% of participants indicated they planned to be very active in the MOOC, striving to complete all course activities each week including participating in an NLC. Fifty percent indicated their plans to be moderately active, striving to complete the core learning activities each week of reading the chapter, watching video presentations, and using learning journal to reflect on course content in light of their experience. Thirty-four percent of those who completed the evaluation survey indicated that they did engage as much as they hoped but the other two-thirds (66%) said they did not (see Chart 2.)

When asked about one goal they had for the MOOC the majority of responses focused upon learning. They set goals to learn how to be more effective in ministry and best practices, and broadening their thinking or gaining a new perspective on ministry to young disciples of various ages and their families. Another popular goal centered around the opportunity to learn, read, and share about Pope Francis's teachings on encounter from *Evangelii Guadium.* It is clear from the data (See Appendix B) that focusing the MOOC around a papal document was an excellent strategy to engage a broader community of practice.

The NACYML MOOC Planning Team agreed with Balch (2013) who points out that we need to think about completion rates for MOOCs in a different way than regular university courses. He explains,

> "This is mainly because of the differing level of investment the students make from the start. In other words 'skin in the game' matters. But MOOC completion rates aren't really low in the context of Internet engagement. A click through rate of 5% for a Google ad is considered a strong success. Convincing 5% to engage intellectually for 8 weeks is, I think, a big deal. If we continue to keep the barrier to entry low, we'll enable students to taste many many courses, and that may be a good thing for education."

**Chart 2. MOOC Engagement**



Did You Engage in the MOOC as Much As You Hoped To?
- Yes
- No
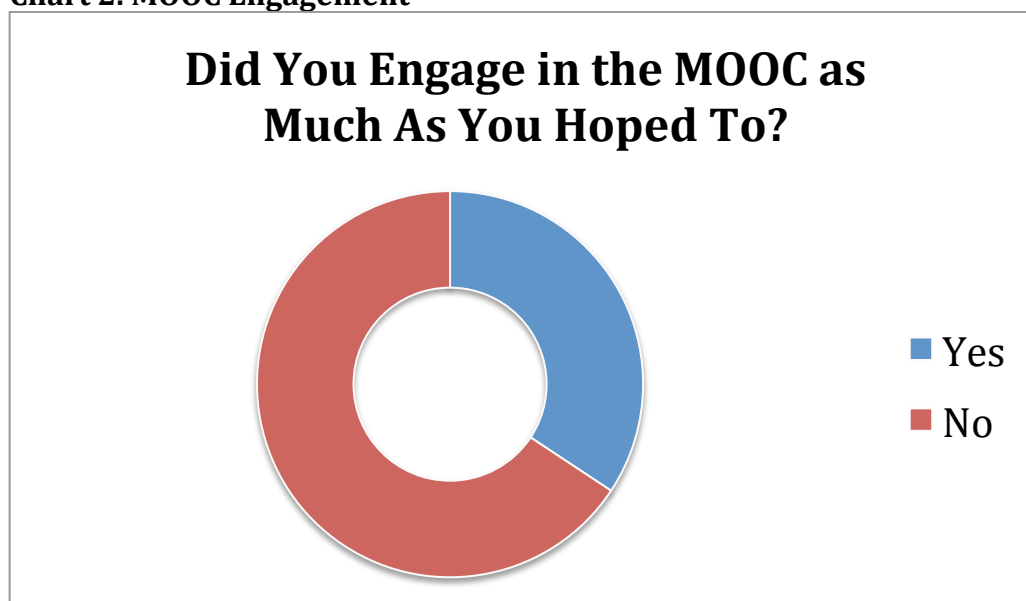
He goes on to say, "if we want to boost completion rates, and perhaps boost engagement in MOOCs we should consider forcing the students to invest. A small enrollment fee might make a big difference. I'd be very interested to see how this would affect engagement, learning and completion rates."

From the beginning of the MOOC development it was clear that NACYML wanted to re-define what participation and completion would be in the MOOC by emphasizing the different paths towards completion that participants could take. In light of thinking like Balach's and experience from the first NACYML MOOC, those planning the next NACYML MOOC, which is set for early in 2016, are considering charging a fee only for those interested in CEUs. This is to increase that level of completion since only 1% of all those enrolled completed CEUs that number increases, 6% of those would be considered community contributors in the engagement schema above. However, the MOOC itself will continue to remain free and open to anyone except minors.

By far the largest participation in the MOOC came from watching the master teacher videos with week one numbers (1,719 views) far exceeding the other weeks. However, week 1 had two master teacher videos which contributed to the spike in numbers for that week (see Table 1.) Participation declined each week with the exception of week 4 which had a slight bump in master teacher video views. This decline was anticipated and there was concern if a 5-week course was too long of duration for busy ministry leaders, however since the papal document had five chapters it was decided 5 weeks would work the best to cover the content. n addition to five learning weeks, an orientation week was included in the course to help people onboard to the course.

**Chart 3. Interest in Participating in Another MOOC**
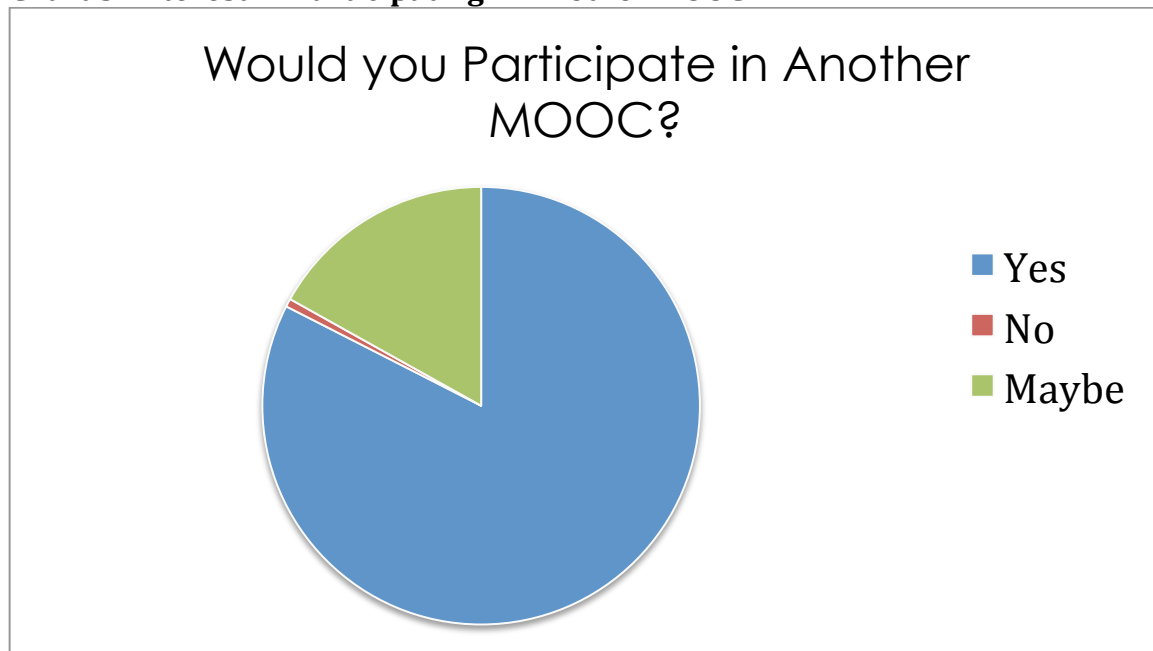
It is important to note that at least 400 people or 36% of those enrolled at a minimum were engaged each week using the 5th week active engagement numbers. While there was a drop off from the first week which could appear to be 100% participation from view counts watching the first master teacher video with 1,101 views and 86% (953) views participating in one of the live sessions (see Table 1 and Chart 6), it is clear that those enrolled were interested in the content of the MOOC more so than other MOOCs based upon retention rates (Koller, et. al, 2013.)

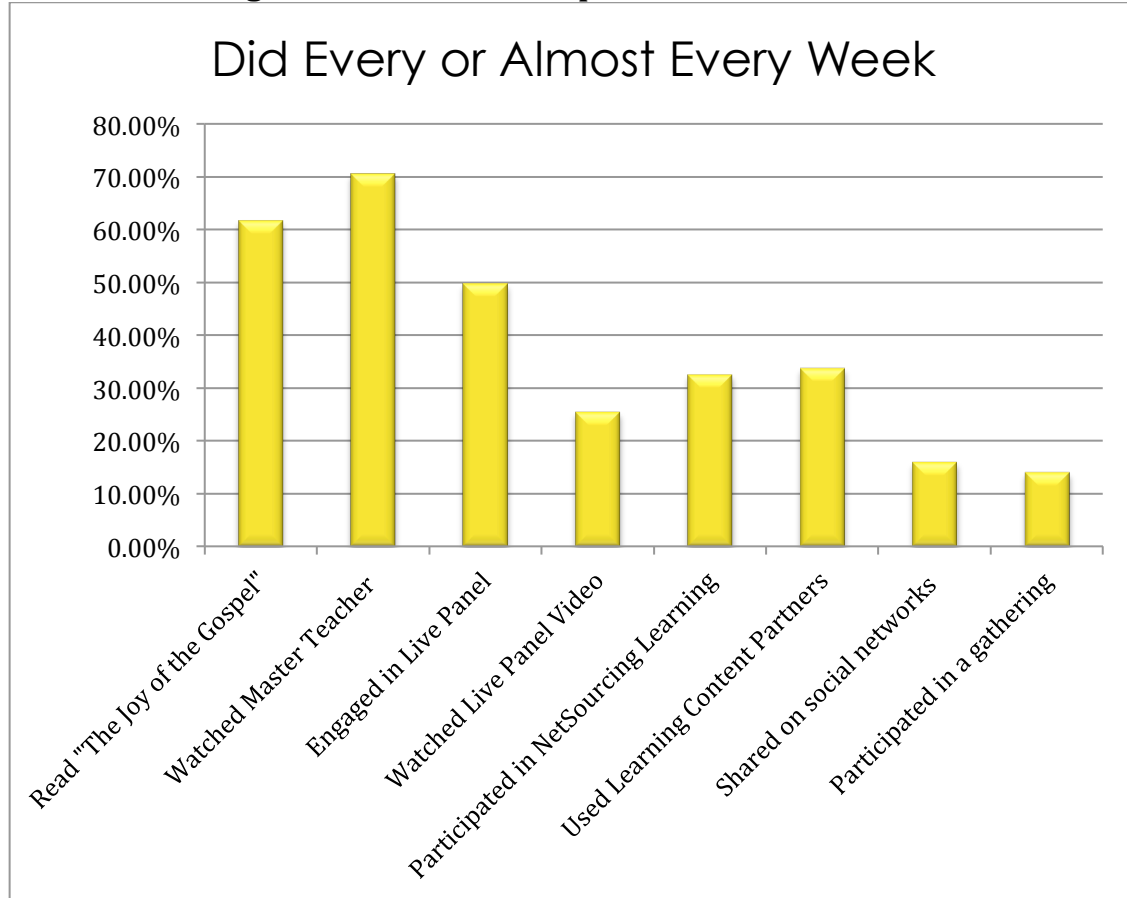**Chart 4. Learning Elements that Participants Did More Often**



**Table 1: Number of Views of Instructional Videos and Live Events**

| Week | Master Teacher | Afternoon Panel | Evening Panel |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 1 | 1,719* | 495 | 458 |
| 2 | 727 | 287 | 350 |
| 3 | 521 | 295 | 216 |
| 4 | 543 | 216 | 140 |
| 5 | 418 | 158 | 113 |
| **Totals** | **3928** | **1451** | **1277** |

*The Week 1 Master Teacher views include two videos one with 1101 views of one video and 618 views of the second.

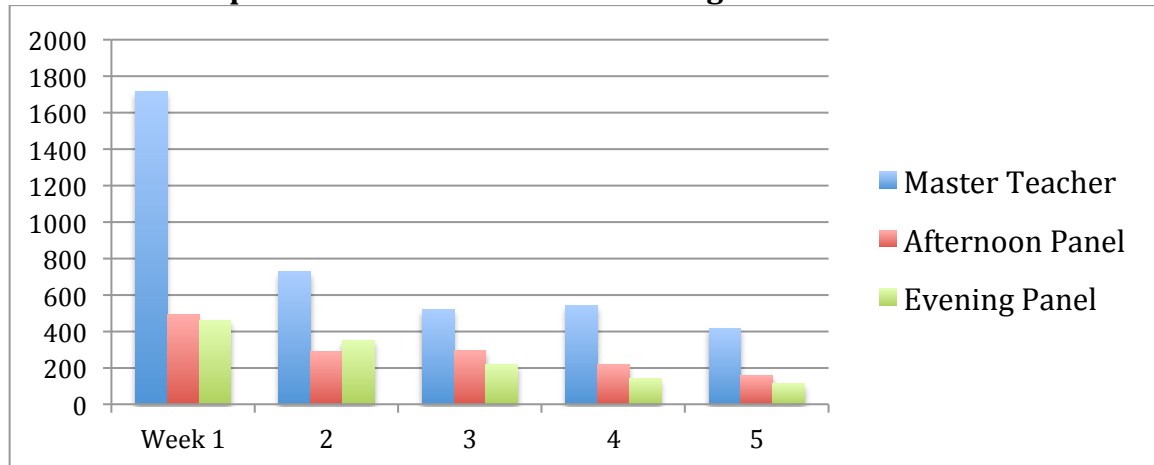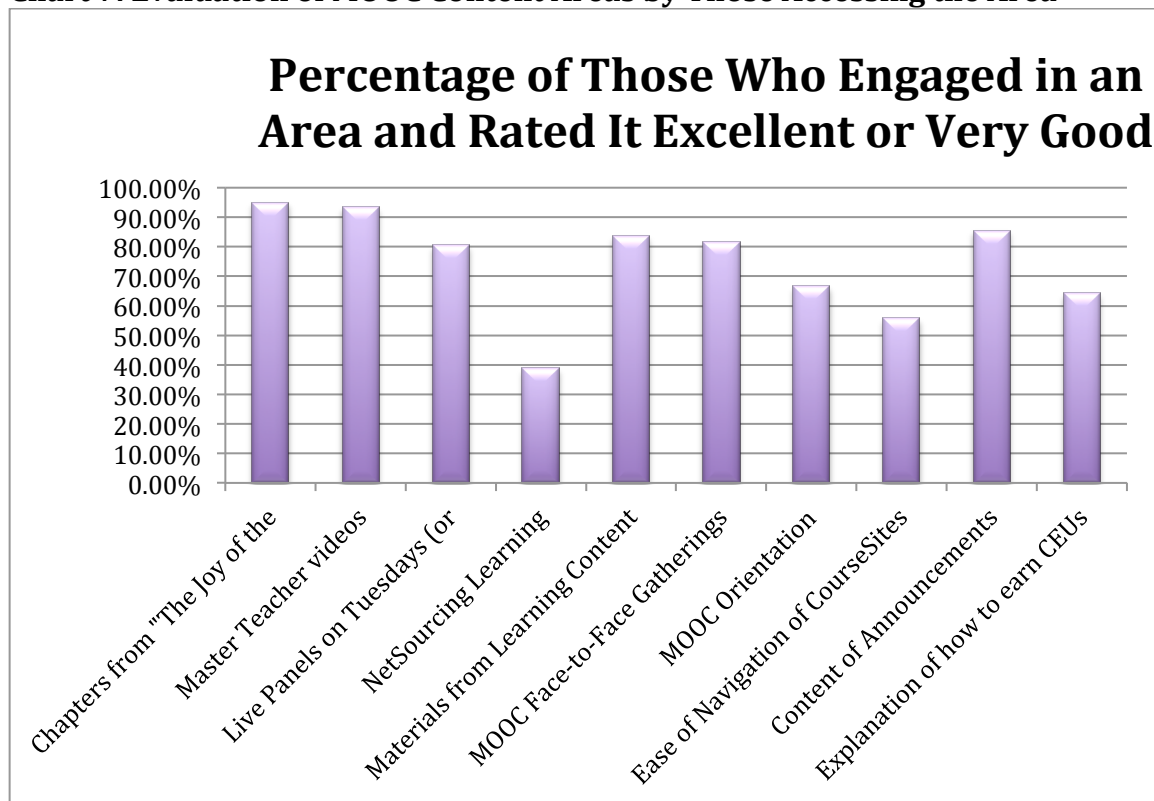**Chart 6. Participation in Live Panels and Viewing of Master Teacher Videos**



**Chart 7. Evaluation of MOOC Content Areas by Those Accessing the Area**



Percentage of Those Who Engaged in an Area and Rated It Excellent or Very Good

However, it should be noted that many people accessed the videos directly from YouTube versus going through the main course web site. The email reminders or social media posts with the direct link could have contributed to participants going straight to YouTube for course content. Because the content being shared was public, it is possible that some of the YouTube viewers of the MOOC videos could be individuals who did not enroll in the actual online classroom extending the outreach of this MOOC beyond those who formally registered or enrolled in the MOOC; hence possibly inflating the participation rate at least somewhat.

## Conclusions

I started this paper with the question, "to MOOC or not to MOOC?" It is clear that the answer to this question lies in the goals or purpose for offering a MOOC by the sponsoring educational institutions, business, or professional associations. The case study of the MOOC examined in this paper sought to both build networks and knowledge (more connectivism and constructivist theories of learning), while at the same time providing critical information and best practices on a central aspect of ministry with young Catholic disciples. This dual purpose attempted to combine or blended the xMOOC and cMOOC models.

Was that blending of the models and purpose necessary (or required) for the NACYML MOOC to be successful? It is clear that from the participants perspectives that the dual focus was necessary based upon their expressed learning goals for the MOOC. In the Week One Survey, it was clear that the goals for the learning experience were both about learning how to improve their ministry efforts and seeking new thinking on the topic of encounter, as well as seeking to be connected and networked with other peers who share their passion for fostering young discipleship through encounters with our the Lord and each other.

Is it possible to meet both sets of needs in one MOOC? The high levels of participation in the various aspects of the MOOC indicate that it was successful if different paths to learning are set forth at the beginning. However, the LMS seemed rather "clunky" for many of the students. This was especially true for the millennials who participated in the evaluation webinar on the MOOC. They were interested in an easier path to access the content such as YouTube and easier modes of sharing learning such as with Facebook. In the upcoming MOOC in early 2016, it has been suggested that a simple outline of learning assets on the organization's website and a Facebook sharing option will be used either in replace of or in addition to the Coursesites by Blackboard LMS. However, it was the Blackboard by Coursesites LMS that gave the MOOC more of the traditional course look and feel, and for the engaged or committed students the LMS worked well. Although in the various evaluation settings there were comments about how difficult or clunky the LMS was to navigate. It is clear a more streamlined approach is needed. In the future and since the type of MOOC can be identified often with the platform it uses (Siemens 2012) this consideration will be important for future MOOCs.

The high level of interest in participating in another NACYML MOOC by respondents (82.5% said yes and 17% said maybe with less than 1% saying no) in the future would indicate that this blended model worked. As with other learning professionals (Seimens 2012) I would recommend though that different platforms be used for the different purposes. I think those who have learning goals more aligned with a cMOOC model might prefer more of a social media driven platform where as those interested in a more traditional or xMOOC experience may prefer a more typical LMS learning environment.

In looking at the MOOC just by the numbers we find:
- 1,428 registered
- 1,105 enrolled
- 6,656 YouTube views of MOOC learning materials including master teacher videos and live sessions
- 32,527 hits in the discussion forums from the 20 NetSourcing Learning Communities (NLC) on the site with 23% of those enrolled making at least one post in an NLC Forum
- 25% retention rate in the 5$^{th}$ and last week of the MOOC down from 86% the first week were considered active participants
- 82.5% of those completing the evaluation survey indicating they would enroll in another NACYML MOOC.

It would seem that from these numbers and the comments on the evaluation survey (see Appendix B) it was a success both for the sponsoring organizations and for the broader fields and audiences of Catholic youth ministry, young adult ministry, and catechetical ministry.

What progress was made towards forming communities of practice since this was an underlying goal of sponsoring the MOOC? It certainly seems like connections were made but the restructuring of the NetSourcing Learning Communities would be an important consideration for the future. The inexperience in leading a MOOC by the facilitators resulted in dispersing the learning conversation by creating too many learning communities. Future MOOCs, should consider consolidation of the learning communities. Additionally, the number actively engaged (56%) and of those interested in participating in a future MOOC (86%) gives NACYML a wonderful opportunity to build on what took place in the future MOOCs and NACYML learning opportunities. However, one MOOC learner said it best regarding the impact that a community of practice can give through learning, "Only in truly giving of ourselves do we find ourselves. This ministry is difficult and discouraging and this course really inspired and encouraged me at the exact moment I needed it most" (Appendix B).

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**Appendix A: User Activity in NetSourcing Learning Communities**

# User Activity in Groups

| Access / Group | | |
|---|---|---|
| Folder | Hits | Percent |
| Archdiocese for the Military, USA | 199 | 0.62% |
| Archdiocese of Milwaukee | 801 | 2.49% |
| Archdiocese of Mobile | 853 | 2.65% |
| Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon | 485 | 1.51% |
| CEU Seekers | 282 | 0.88% |
| Catechetical Leaders | 6398 | 19.90% |
| Catholic High School & Campus Ministry | 3217 | 10.00% |
| Catholic Middle School/ Junior High Ministry | 0 | 0.00% |
| Diocesan Groups | 32 | 0.10% |
| Diocese of Allentown | 495 | 1.54% |
| Diocese of Buffalo | 619 | 1.92% |
| Diocese of Erie | 117 | 0.36% |
| Diocese of Grand Rapids | 374 | 1.16% |
| Idioma Español | 309 | 0.96% |
| NetSourcing Learning Communities | 50 | 0.16% |
| NetSourcing Learning Community Facilitator Group | 1415 | 4.40% |
| Ohio Dioceses | 2000 | 6.22% |
| Outdoor Ministry Programs (Scouting) | 186 | 0.58% |
| Parents/Guardians/ Family | 1868 | 5.81% |
| Parish Senior High Ministry | 4643 | 14.44% |
| Parish and Catholic Middle School/Junior High Ministry | 2996 | 9.32% |
| Theology and Ministry Formation | 2906 | 9.04% |
| Young Adults and College Campus Ministry | 1912 | 5.95% |
| | **32157** | |

**Appendix B:**
**Sample MOOC Comments Summarizing the Impact of MOOC Participation**

There are sample responses to this question on the evaluation survey: *Please share one thing that you are taking away from this MOOC experience that impacts you personally or how you engage young people and their families in ministry?*

The 3rd session, I think, spoke of looking at what and how we require service for the Confirmation Candidates. I have been praying about that and am using some of these ideas for my presentation for the candidates/families.

The course pushed me to read "Joy of the Gospel." It is such a pleasure to hear what our pope has to say about ministry and how down to earth and real he is about our ministries. That has helped me be motivated and know that the top dog in our organization is right there with me and encouraging me. I look forward to looking for some of the panel experts materials and networking with some of our MOOCers.

I'm taking the whole idea of encounter and relationships as a discussion to the rest of our staff.  We are discussing how we can fire up our staff efforts and our parish. I think it will make a good discussion.

There have been many "aha" moments, or moments that resonate with my experience.  I started out in youth ministry over a decade ago (and in HS education before that for another decade) but work in family ministry now.  I loved the fact that Bishop Caggiano stated from the beginning that while we are speaking of teens, the need to foster a culture of encounter is true for adults as well.  I also believe there is something to Bob McCarty's addition of "home" to our focus on heart, hands, head.  There were many, many moments like this throughout the viewing of videos and reading of chats.  I have not made my way through all of it yet, but I expect there will be many more!

That I am not alone sometimes in my challenges of feeling overwhelmed.

We need to be bold and take a look at what we are currently doing to ensure we are meeting our young people and their families where they are.

The thirst for learning!  We had people from different ministries involved within our Diocese and I realized how much everyone was thirsting for more!

I was thrilled that the MOOC was so inclusive of everyone who works with youth. I believe that this level of inclusivity and collaboration is the future of youth ministry. Personally, I was moved by reading the Pope's exhortation to open myself up to serving more and with increased joy.

The Joy of the Gospel embraces and touches on so many concepts to a strong faith life!  Living the gospel and deepening your relationship with Christ will help you to see the need to serve others for the greater glory of God!  Jesus...Others...You!!!  We gathered each week as a youth ministry & religious education staff.  We also invited the rest of the pastoral staff to join us. (A few did.)  As a result, we have had some terrific brainstorming about our current ministries and ways to make them more engaging.  In two weeks, our CYM staff will be having a full day of discernment about the direction of our ministry.  We were already planning to do this, but reading Joy of the Gospel and participating in the MOOC added a lot of fuel to our ideas.

We can take many ideas of sharing our Faith away from this MOOC experience.  Mine is to share our Faith openly and sincerely so that the families can feel they also can and not be afraid to experience God's Love and Forgiveness always.  It is a wonderful feeling to know we belong to something so great as God's Family.  Thank you for the sharing.

I have grown so much personally and professionally, as a direct result of participating in this MOOC experience.  The impact on the readings, live panel discussions, NetSourcing Learning Community, and interaction with others have positively influenced my faith, view of the Catholic Church, and gives me hope and "joy!" serving Christ and His Church.  Thank you!!!!

The realization that encounter happens at all times and not just because we schedule an encounter. Also, the community that participated in the learning is vast reminding me there are many doing the work of the Body of Christ.

This mooc challenged me to bring the language of evangelization more specifically into my sessions with youth and broaden the conversation beyond what I do with young people to the whole parish. We often bring the Good News to them but don't necessarily give them the language to share it with others.

Archbishop Kurtz - "Reality is more important than ideas." I want my youth out in the world more and to stand next to those less fortunate so they can understand better "solidarity - the conviction that we are born into the fabric of humanity."

I was a bit "intimidated" at first by the thought of reading an apostolic exhortation.  Was so nice to find that this material was very readable and understandable.  I think it helps to let others in ministry know this as well - that the teachings of the church are readable and understandable.  I found many good quotes in the chapters that can be used to begin discussions with my students and their families.  Michael made a comment on the evening panel week 2 "are the youth object of or agents of evangelization" Really thinking about that will change how we work with and talk to the youth.

Only in truly giving of ourselves do we find ourselves. This ministry is difficult and discouraging and this course really inspired and encouraged me at the exact moment I needed it most.