

MOOC Camp Guide for Facilitators

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs



This guide is intended for U.S. Embassy and Consulate-identified facilitators for the MOOC Camp program. One of the goals of the program is to learn about what works in blending MOOCs with in-person learning experiences. We are sharing publicly so that others can draw from past experiences and learn with us, as well.

If you have a good practice you'd like to share, send it to MOOC-WG@state.gov. The good practices that follow were drawn from recommendations by facilitators, staff from our Embassies and Consulates, course professors, and MOOC providers.

Preparing Participants

Before you start discussions, you may need to prepare students to take an online course and use the platform, especially if this is their first online course.

- » **MOOCS 101:** Many first-time participants may benefit from a brief training on how to create an account, navigate the course, and build the skills needed to be successful.
- » **edX MOOC Demo:** edX hosts a MOOC Demo Course that allows students to test the platform prior to enrolling in a course.

Structuring Discussions

MOOC Camps are most successful with weekly meetings. That said, there are many ways to structure these weekly meetings. You should choose a structure that is appropriate for the size of your group and meets the needs of your participants.

- » **Seminar format:** Your group can get together to discuss the content or explore a particular subject covered during the course together. These discussions can be free-flowing. Seminars work best with smaller groups (under 25).

- » **Enrichment format:** Instead of discussing course content, the facilitator can arrange guest speakers and other activities that build upon the course material. For example, an entrepreneurship course might host a local business person for a Q&A session. These work well with groups of all sizes.
- » **Project-based format:** U.S. universities have developed a model called "service learning," which integrates community service into the classroom experience. You can work with students to identify service opportunities that allow them to practice the new skills and ideas that they learn in the online course. This format works best with smaller groups that include highly motivated students. From a brief training on how to create an account, navigate the course, and build the skills needed to be successful.

The students will learn better when they are actively engaged with the material. We do not encourage facilitators to just play course videos or lecture on the content. In some cases, facilitators can have access to complete course materials ahead of time in order to prepare a more structured experience for participants. Please contact the MOOC Camp Counselor at MOOC-WG@state.gov to see if materials are available ahead of time for your particular course.

Hosting Enrichment Activities

- » **Guest speakers:** Entrepreneurs and other community experts can serve as excellent guest speakers.
- » **Virtual speakers:** U.S.-based virtual speakers, including experts in the course subject, can provide interactive experiences for students. When arranging virtual speakers, consider working with other courses or facilitators nearby.
- » **MOOC Course professors:** The professors that host and produce MOOCs are often interested in working with MOOC Camps.
- » **Speakers programs:** Embassy or Consulate-sponsored speakers can also speak to MOOC Camp groups as part of their trips.

Building Community

- » Discussions can continue between weekly discussions online and among participants. You can help spur on these conversations, as well.
- » Facebook & online groups: Many facilitators and MOOC Camp participants create Facebook groups for students to ask each other questions and talk between weekly discussions.

Turning Content Into Action

The MOOC Camp experience does not need to end in the classroom. As a facilitator, you can work with the participants to apply the lessons they learn in their own lives and in their communities.

- » **Ask the participants:** Participants often have strong ideas about how they can use the content to improve their communities. You can initiate a conversation about how the lessons might be put into practice at any point in the course, though early conversations are more likely to yield results by the end of the course.
- » **Engage with local community leaders:** Participants can benefit from engaging with local leaders. Working with the Embassy, you are uniquely positioned to create an opportunity for dialogue between students and local community leaders in government, business, and civil society.
- » **Draw from the Service Learning Community:** U.S. universities often use service learning to integrate community service into the classroom experience. See the American Association of Community College's Service Learning page for additional ideas.

Working with the Embassy

- » The U.S. Embassy/Consulate is an important partner for MOOC Camp facilitators. Embassies have access to the Department's MOOC Camp experts in Washington, DC. Many Embassy contacts also have prior experience in organizing MOOC Camps.
- » Stay in regular contact with the Public Affairs Officer or Cultural Affairs Officer. After each discussion, it may help to report back on the program, including on successes and challenges you encounter.

Working with Other Facilitators

- » Struggling with designing a discussion? Interested in collaborating with other MOOC Camps? Consider asking your fellow facilitators for help.
- » The State Department has created a voluntary mailing list for facilitators, available on Google Groups. Feel free to use the group to share ideas, ask questions, and connect with other facilitators.

Improving the Program

- » **Surveys:** We need your help in completing surveys that help us improve the program. The State Department has surveys for posts, facilitators, and students. We ask that posts and/or facilitators complete a short survey before and after the course. Student surveys should be completed at the end of the course. For links to the current surveys, please email MOOC-WG@state.gov.
- » **Send success stories (and lessons learned!):** We also aim to spread innovative facilitation practices, but we can only spread innovations we know about. Share your work with the Embassy, and feel free to always email us at MOOC-WG@state.gov.
- » **Debrief with the Embassy:** Your ideas and reflections can have a powerful impact on the future of the MOOC Camp program. Share your thoughts with the Embassy after the program concludes.