

# MOOCs for professional development in Bangladesh: Difficulties and conveniences

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## Abstract

The Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that aim at developing teachers' efficiency have been gaining popularity worldwide. Besides enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills, MOOCs bring a qualitative change in learning and teaching in the educational arena. This qualitative study investigated the difficulties teachers faced in taking MOOCs, the convenience of taking MOOCs by attending camps, and the notable changes in teaching after taking MOOCs. Out of thirty-nine EFL Teachers who in 2018 attended two MOOC camps sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, seventeen participated in this research. The findings reported that teachers' challenges were primarily technical, technological, procedural, and time constraints. However, taking MOOCs by attending camps was convenient for mutual support, motivation, and best learning practices. The results showed that MOOCs helped teachers raise learners' intercultural awareness, develop content knowledge, facilitate C.T. skills, and interact more in the EFL classroom. The findings will help policymakers and teacher educators to use MOOCs more effectively for teachers' continuous professional development.

**Keywords** MOOCs, Profession development, Contextual difficulties, EFL classroom

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

The continuous professional development of teachers is a pressing need of the present time due to the progress of society and its demand. With the new generations' entrance into the educational setting, teachers need to adopt and adapt their teaching approaches, strategies, and methods in line with the learning styles and characteristics of the new generation of learners. More importantly, there is an increased demand for skills and competence in the workforce, which requires better professional development (Milligan & Littlejohn, 2014; Noe, Clarke, & Klein, 2014).

The professional development of the teachers is significantly prodigious, for it has manifold benefits to ameliorate the standard of “education”, such as it helps



build the capacity of the teachers, improve their teaching practices, better promote the learners' learning, and support learners to be reflective teachers (Gore & Ladwig, 2006; Borko, 2004; Schön, 1983). Many researchers have substantiated the significance of teacher education or professional education because of its implications in policy-making, curriculum, and syllabus design, lesson planning, teaching practices, and assessment (Li, 2020; Al-Jarf, 2021; Al-Harbi & Ahmad, 2022)

In Bangladesh, the CLT approach was introduced to teach English in the early nineties, but teachers mostly use the features of GTM while teaching (Ullah, 2015; Mariyam, Kabir, & Ullah, 2015; Ali & Walker, 2014). Instead of teaching four skills in an integrated way, reading and writing skills are commonly emphasized in class (Ullah, Uddin, Karmakar, Alam, & Islam, 2022; Ullah & Fatema, 2013). It is noticed that teaching tends to be everyone's business. Anyone after completion of his/her Graduation or Masters starts teaching without any pre-service teacher training. Even after joining, most of them do not have the opportunity of having in-service training. More notably, it is observed that ELT graduates who get theoretical knowledge of teaching English at the M.A. level cannot carry their knowledge practically to the classroom.

Consequently, overall learning and teaching get affected. Against this backdrop, Rahman, et. al. (2019) in their research suggested supporting the teacher training programs in Bangladesh by utilizing local resources instead of depending on foreign funds. Therefore, facilitating MOOC camps at regular intervals can be a good initiative for the professional development of the teachers in Bangladesh because it does not have much cost involvement and can be facilitated utilizing local expertise.

### 1.1. MOOC for professional development

MOOC is a comparatively new platform of learning which launched its journey back in 2008 as a mode of distance learning. In the term MOOC, M stands for massive, O for open, the second O for online, and C for the course. David Cormier and Alexandar (Decker, 2014) mentioned the term MOOC for the first time at the University of Prince Edward Island. This is called *massive*, as a huge number of participants from different countries across the globe can attend the course irrespective of their educational, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Being asynchronous in nature, neither the participants nor the course instructors are required to meet in-person; instead, they take part in the online courses via Learning Management Systems such as Canvas, Coursera, Edx, etc., and internet-capable devices such as mobile, notepad, laptop, computer, etc. It is called *open* because the

learning management system (LMS) via which the course is offered and the resources available on the LMS are accessible to participants from any corner of the world. The participants of the MOOC can access the syllabus, course outline, different modules, reading materials, quizzes, video lectures, lecture transcripts, etc., via LMS.

Another reason it is called open is that the course does not require a participant to pay any money. Anyone can take a MOOC free of cost. However, in a few cases, some MOOCs demand a minimal fee from their participants if they want certificates after course completion. The course is facilitated online, and all the materials mentioned above are also uploaded on LMS for the participants to access and download them at their convenience by using the internet. Participants can access the MOOC platform online via apps or websites by using internet-ready devices i.e. laptop, desktop, notebook, mobile phone, or tablet. That is why the course is called *online*. MOOC maintains all the criteria of a usual course offered in educational institutions, such as it has a fixed time duration to start and end the course which ranges from four to six weeks. It also has a course syllabus, instructor/s, assessment criteria, materials for reading or watching, course participants and so on.

### **2. Literature review**

MOOCs have drawn attention in academia for their benefits in training and improving pedagogy. Different universities across the world began to accept the model of learning gradually since George Siemens and Stephen Downes' presented their seminal work titled *CCK08: Connectivism and Connected Knowledge* on MOOC in the University of Manitoba (Mehlenbacher, 2012; Decker, 2014; Thompson, 2011; Lowe, 2014). MOOCs are considered a unique model of professional development because of their potentiality in pedagogy and andragogy (Bayne & Ross, 2014; Mori & Ractliffe, 2016; Bozkurt, Akgün-Özbek, & Zawacki-Richter, 2017; Hasser, 2017; Malita, Tiru, & Grosseck, 2018).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a must in order that teachers can impart education to learners keeping abreast of the need and trends of modern times. It is essential not only for the experienced in-service learners but also for the pre-service teachers waiting to join the teaching profession as a workforce. Nonetheless, it is to note that teacher training programs, both via face-to-face and MOOCs, involve the pros and cons of different natures. Because of some major limitations of face-to-face teacher training programs as they involve fixed time, space, and cost, MOOCs can be a good supplement or alternative for CPD. Marquis (2013) argues that

MOOCs can be a popular means of CPD because they are ongoing, free and flexible; teachers can adopt and adapt the resources for classroom use. Supporting MOOCs for CPD, Hicks (2015) state that MOOCs help teachers make headway as they can orient teachers with the latest teaching materials and teaching styles. He adds that they enable them to share the best practices, collaborate, and guide them to use suitable technology for teaching. Moreover, he mentions MOOCs keep them aware of the latest trends and developments in their domains. CPD should consider the social and cultural contextual factors for promoting the teachers' best practices. More significantly, it should instil a culture of sharing learning amongst teachers via an approach based on community so that instructors can ponder their beliefs and practices (Barab, Makinster, Moore, & Cunningham, 2001).

Though there is an overflow of different training programs, many are not standard and effective. However, many studies underscore MOOCs' utility as an alternative to costly professional development programs. MOOCs are relatively cheaper platforms for education. Unlike traditional professional development programs, MOOCs do not require the involvement of equipment, materials, coaching spot, trainer time, transportation to the training venue, registration, or other charges (Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gallagher, 2002). However, although MOOCs have created waves and sparks worldwide, there is still a lack of sufficient research on different contexts regarding their vitality and utility. (Misra, 2018; Mabuan & Ebron, 2018).

### 2.1. MOOCs sponsored by ECA

The Online Professional English Network (OPEN) under the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (ECA) offers Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for learners, teachers, and other professionals of non-English speaking countries. The U.S. Department of State sponsors these programs to improve mutual relationships with different countries through educational and cultural exchange. The MOOCs are designed and developed by the top institutions and universities of the USA, and administered by FHI 360, a non-profit human development organization. Under the supervision of ECA, the Regional English Language Officers (RELOs), in collaboration with the U.S. Embassies of the respective countries offer MOOCs. Ranging from five to six weeks, the courses are offered in different cohorts, such as Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall in order that teachers from around the world can attend the courses at their convenience.

Every year, the same MOOCs are not offered. Since 2014, a number of

MOOCs have been offered to teachers in Bangladesh via MOOC Camps in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna, and Rajshahi by American Center, the U.S. Embassy, Dhaka, and the U.S. Exchange Alumni with the guidance of RELO, Kathmandu, NEPAL. The ECA-sponsored MOOCs offered across the world are- 1. *Shaping the Way We Teach English, English for Media Literacy, Teaching English to the Young Learners (TEYL), Professional Development for Teacher Trainers, English for Business and Entrepreneurship, TESOL Methodology, Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into the Exploration of Culture in an EFL Setting, Fostering Student Motivation and Engagement (FSME), English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), Content-Based Instruction, Teaching Grammar Communicatively, Using Educational Technology in the English Language Classroom, etc.* MOOCs are offered in association with Arizona State University, USA and SIT Graduate Institute. The two MOOCs based on which this research has been conducted are *Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into the Exploration of Culture in an EFL Setting and Professional Development for Teacher Trainers.*

### 2.2. MOOC Camp

The term MOOC camp denotes a camp for MOOCers where MOOC participants meet to complete any particular online course. According to Trainer (2014), a camp for MOOCers is a “learning hub that brings online learning offline”. The camp is helpful for MOOCers as they can meet in-person to share their learning experience. MOOC camps provide scope for “facilitated discussions around MOOCs, Open Courseware, and other free online courses” (The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs, 2018). The Bureau of ECA under the U.S. Department of State initiated the MOOCs so that the participants of any particular MOOC can be supported to take an online course at any time, staying in any part of the world. Developed in association with reputed U.S. universities and graduate institutes, they are offered via online Learning Management Systems (LMS), namely Canvas, Edx, and Coursera, which are convenient for learners to access course materials uploaded very systematically and in an organized way.

There are two ways MOOCers can take MOOC courses- individually or by participating in MOOC camps with other MOOCers. The MOOC camps are usually arranged in American Spaces by respective U.S. Embassies of any particular country. Also, they are arranged in public or private institutions. The camps arranged in American Spaces are usually facilitated by U.S. Embassy Staff or by the alumni of U.S. Exchange programs such as Fulbright TEA, Fulbright DIA, Fulbright FLTA, or any other exchange programs related to the English Language. On the other hand, the MOOC

camps arranged in public or private institutions are not facilitated by U.S. Embassy staff. Instead, the U.S. Exchange Alumni of the mentioned programs usually facilitate them (Haynie, 2014). The public and private institutions are typically selected based on the opinions of the majority of the teachers taking the MOOCs. A few considerations work behind choosing a camp venue- if the venue is located in a place not far from the participants working or living places or if it is located in an area with a good communication system. After selecting the MOOC camp venue, the facilitator of the camp follows the guidelines prepared by the Bureau of ECA, USA.

A MOOC, in general, runs for five weeks. The main objective of a MOOC camp is to help and guide the MOOC participants to complete the course successfully and effectively. During the five weeks, the MOOCers meet four to five times as a requirement of the MOOC camp culture set by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, USA. Taking into consideration the conveniences of the facilitator and the MOOC participants, the weekly meeting time and place is decided. For the U.S. Embassy-facilitated MOOC camp, the English Language Program Coordinator of the respective U.S. Embassy of a country usually decides the weekly in-person meeting time as per the convenience of the MOOC camp facilitator. After the weekly schedule is declared, the MOOC camp participants then confirm their participation in the MOOC camp. The MOOC camp involves several activities, such as helping teachers enrol for the MOOC, orienting participants with the LMS systems to use them properly, helping them understand the syllabus, guiding them on how to do the assignments, and doing the quizzes and taking part in the discussion. The weekly meeting also discusses the key concepts from the reading and video materials, how to implement those concepts in teaching contexts, sharing the technological or other problems that participants encounter during the course period, best practices relevant to the weekly materials, service-learning activities, etc. The first and second MOOC camps for this study were arranged in American Corner, Chittagong, and at a private school in Chittagong. For the convenience of the participating teachers, the MOOC camps were arranged after office hours in the afternoon as the participants were working teachers from different schools, colleges, and universities. The teachers who attended a minimum of four meetings out of five were awarded graduation certificate from U.S. Embassy, Dhaka.

The base of this study is the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), and connectivism (cf. Downes, 2008; Siemens, 2005), which postulate the “transformative possibilities offered by emerging technologies” (Bell, 2011).

Bandura (1977) holds that it is through the observation of the behaviors of other people that people learn and act. They also compare and contrast their manners and behaviors with others to proceed to further action. They try to know others' experiences, share their own experiences, and thus gain additional expertise. In this study, the participants of the MOOC camps observed each other and shared each other's online and face-to-face learning experiences during their MOOC camp sessions. This study, in particular, explored the questions stated below:

- a. What are the difficulties teachers face in taking MOOCs?
- b. What are the conveniences of taking MOOCs by attending camps?
- c. What are the notable changes in teachers' practice after the completion of the MOOCs?

### **3. Research method**

This qualitative research has covered two MOOCs sponsored by U.S. Department of State from February 2018 to November 2018. Each of the courses continued for five consecutive weeks, and participants got into the sites of the courses via Canvas ([www.canvas.net](http://www.canvas.net)), an online learning management system. The initial course for this study was *Integrating Critical Thinking into the Exploration of Culture in an EFL Setting* provided by World Learning from February 19 to March 30, 2018. Provided by Arizona State University, USA, the second course was *Professional Development for Teacher Trainers*, which was offered from October 15 to November 19, 2018. Both courses were offered as a part of the E-Teacher Program of American English.

The participants of this study were 17 English teachers out of 39 who successfully completed the two MOOCs participating in MOOC camps. Some of them attempted to complete MOOCs individually. All the participants were English teachers with Bachelor and M.A. degrees. These in-service teachers served at different levels- Secondary, Higher Secondary, and Tertiary Levels based in Chittagong and its neighboring areas. The teachers worked in 19 different schools, colleges and universities that were both public and private in nature. The MOOC campers completed the weekly modules of the MOOCs online at their convenient time, and they met every Thursday during the course periods at their MOOC campsite. The first of these two MOOC camps was facilitated at American Corner Chittagong, located at Jamal Khan, Chittagong. The second was facilitated at a local private school at Chawkbazar, Chittagong. The MOOC Camps were facilitated by me, a Fulbright Alum of the U.S. Department of State.

I used qualitative research as the objective was to understand the cultural experience of the teachers who attended the MOOC camp. This method is justifiable for this study as it sought to analyze the experience systematically and then describe the cultural experience to be understood (Ellis, 2004). To be precise, I used narrative inquiry for this research because it is suitable when the research includes “the story in the study, the tale in theory, the parable in principle, and the drama in the life” (Turner & Bruner, 1986; Suleiman, 1986; Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Rosaldo, 1989; Bordo, 1990). Another reason for using this methodology for this study was that it captured the personal dimensions, accounts, and experiences of the participants in a cultural context over time, which are essential traits of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

### 3.1. Instruments

I have collected data for this research from a number of sources- the individual reflections of the 17 MOOCers, three focus group discussions (FGDs), and semi-structured interviews. The MOOC camp participants wrote their reflections on MOOCs they had taken, respectively. The reflection paper included their demographic profile, the description of the MOOCs, the rationale behind their participating in the MOOC, the different advantages of taking the MOOCs by taking part in the MOOC camps, challenges they encountered while taking the MOOCs and the notable changes in teaching after taking the MOOCs.

### 3.2. Data analysis

The data collected from FGDs and semi-structured interviews were transcribed. The researcher then read and reread the transcription to have a general understanding of the data. Next, the data were coded to generate themes. The reflection data were also codified and analyzed thematically. Finally, the findings were triangulated with the FGD data and the data driven from semi-structured interviews.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Difficulties faced by the MOOC participants

The teachers faced some difficulties while taking the MOOCs despite their positive experiences. They mentioned three barriers that caused hindrances to their finishing of the MOOCs. The first is related to technical and technological issues, the second is associated with the procedure in enrolling and doing the MOOCs, and the third is time constraints.



### *4.1.1 Technical and technological issues*

Regarding the first barrier, the participants shared that they did not know about using Learning Management System (LMS). One of them said,

“I never imagined that a course could be conducted and completed via online. The system is completely new to me. So, I encountered a problem in getting familiar and accustomed to this learning system” (P7-M).

On the same issue, another participant reported,

“I did not use any learning platform like Canvas before. So, it took time for me to understand how it works, especially how to find the syllabus, reading materials, submitting quiz, assignments, and participating in the written discussion” (P16-F)

The common problem that all the participants mentioned was weak and poor internet connection. They faced this problem of unstable internet connectivity both at their homes and offices. As the MOOCers had to take the courses online, the participants faced difficulties accessing the syllabus, reading materials, video lectures, etc. One MOOCer said,

“As I did not have the opportunity to use wifi. I had to depend on the data connection of the mobile company to access to the Learning Management System to go through the reading materials and watch the video lectures, and oftentimes my experience was really horrible. It took longer time to watch the videos, or sometimes they got stuck.” [P5-M].

Regarding the same issues another teacher mentioned,

“The Wi-Fi at my school, which is located out of the main city, allowed me only to read the articles and the transcripts of the videos. I could never watch the video completely. Because of a very poor speed of internet connection, I downloaded only the transcripts” [P9-M].

Some of the participants bought faster mobile internet packages from different mobile companies and others took Wi-Fi connection from internet service providers to solve this problem. The difficulty in accessing materials was another issue MOOCers faced while attending the MOOCs. One participant informed,

“I was clicking on the materials to be read for week one. But they were not opening. What happened was I could neither download them nor I could open to read them” [P10-F].

Another participant reported,

“I could open the Module pack but could not scroll down to go through the materials. The probable reason might be my PDF reader was not supporting the file” [P12-F]. Regarding the problem in watching the uploaded videos, one teacher shared that she was clicking on the link to the videos. But they were not redirected to open and play. After several attempts, some videos started, but the streaming was not smooth.” (P13-M)

Not knowing how to submit assignments, quizzes, and comments in the

discussion section posed a challenge for some MOOC camp participants. One of the participants shared,

“At the initial stage, I was facing problems in submitting an assignment. I prepared the weekly assignment. But I was not finding an option to upload and submit it.” (P11-M)

Another teacher said that he was not finding option to take the Quiz. With the help of a fellow teacher, he found the option but did not know that he had the opportunity to take Quizzes a number of times to secure good score [P15-M].

“I knew that I would have to participate in discussion though I did not have a clear idea what type of discussion it involved. Also, I was struggling to find the discussion section to comment on others' assignments,” reported a MOOCer [P4-F].

Another challenge teachers faced was downloading MOOCers' badge, and certificate. Almost all the participants completed the requirements, such as going through the reading materials, watching the videos, submitting assignments, taking Quizzes, and participating in discussions to be MOOC graduates. Finally, they would receive badges and certificates jointly issued by the U.S. Department of State, USA and the implementing partner, either a U.S. university or an institution. At this stage, many MOOCers were facing problems in downloading badges and certificates. “I did not know I would have to create a separate account for downloading badge and certificate,” one participant reported [P6-F]. Another teacher said he found the badge to download but could not locate the certificate [P7-M].

#### *4.1.2. Procedural issues*

Another concern participants reported was procedural. Many faced problems in enrolling. Because of not having good knowledge about technology use, the enrollment process emerged as a fair challenge for some of the teachers. One of the teachers shared,

“I clicked on the required enrol option and gave my email address and password. I didn't know that I would have to confirm my registration clicking on the registration link sent to my email address” (P4-F) The same problem was shared by some other participants as well.

After completing the registration process, the MOOC camp participants also faced challenges using the LMS (Learning Management System), Canvas. Being unfamiliar with the online learning platform such as Canvas, teachers encountered problems accessing and using it.

“I was trying to log in to the Canvas site on which our MOOC was facilitated. But it was difficult for me to find out how to access the site” [P3-M].

One teacher reported,

“I could log in to the Canvas site but could not understand how it worked. I was struggling to find the syllabus and modules” [P5-M].

Another participant stated,

“I could not initially understand how to submit the assignments and complete the quizzes. Moreover, downloading the reading materials, watching the uploaded videos, and participating in the discussion were quite challenging for me” [P6-F]

The teachers who attended the MOOC camp served in several schools and institutions located in different parts of Chittagong. So, one of the biggest challenges was to agree upon the weekly meeting venues, times, and dates for the MOOCers. The facilitator of the MOOC camp shared:

“There was a requirement to attend at least four MOOC Camp sessions out of five to be considered as a graduate by the U.S. Embassy. I had to confirm that the MOOC camp participants were present at the meet-up a minimum of four times.” [P1-M].

To address this concern, I had to do good planning. First, I created a WhatsApp group including the teachers willing to attend the MOOC camp. I shared with them the convenient venues and asked for their opinions to decide which venue would be convenient for them. After having their opinions about the meeting venue of the MOOC Camp, I fixed suitable dates and times for the teachers to participate in the MOOC Camp.

### *4.1.3. Time-constraints*

Another concern that the participants shared was their time constraints. As the participating teachers were full-time service holders, they were packed with professional tasks and assignments. Hence, it was quite challenging for them to manage time to read the reading materials, watch the recorded video, complete the assignments, take the weekly quizzes, etc. One of the teachers stated, “I am a full-time university teacher. I grappled with time issues when I started to take part in the Camp to complete the MOOCs. I sacrificed some relaxation and rest hours to study and prepare assignments of the MOOCs. Indeed, it was a tough decision” [P1-M]. While sharing the experience, another MOOCer stated, “...my greatest problem was managing time. I had to discard some other tasks and activities to finish the MOOCs. It helped me to learn to prioritize tasks and avoid less important things.” [P2-F].

### 4.2. Conveniences of the MOOC camp for the participants

As MOOCs are facilitated online, the opportunity of meeting face-to-face and interaction in-person with the co-MOOCers created added advantage

for the participating teachers. For the two MOOC camps that continued for ten weeks, there were ten face-to-face meetings held in certain venues and on particular dates. During the meet-ups, the participating teachers discussed the weekly reading materials, shared their understanding, and took help from the MOOC camp facilitator or co-MOOCers if anything from the reading or video materials was unclear to them. Moreover, the participants discussed how they could prepare lesson plans integrating their takeaways from the modules and implementing them in classroom practice. More importantly, they shared this connection's best practices and success stories.

This study has surfaced three main benefits of MOOC camp for the participants: (1) it acted as a platform for mutual support for the MOOC camp participants, (2) it supported a community of practice, and (3) The MOOC Camp served as a platform for collaboration and networking.

#### *4.2.1. MOOC camp served as a platform for mutual support*

The best thing, one of the participants shared, about MOOC Camp is that it helped her to continue the MOOCs while he was hesitant to drop out or not,

“Sometimes, I felt like discontinuing MOOCs due to time constraints and a busy schedule, but my fellow MOOCers were my constant supporters and guide, which helped me to continue. I am grateful to them that I have completed a few MOOCs with their motivation and support” [P14-F].

Other participants echoed the same voice. One participant reported,

“My mother was sick. I was occupied with attending on her. Hence, I could not go through all the reading materials for that particular week. Resultantly, I could not finish the assignment for that period. Also, I missed attending the MOOC camp session of the week. The following week, I felt tremendous pressure because of the pending work at my institution. I felt like not continuing the MOOC anymore. During this time, one of my fellow MOOC camp participants called me, wanted to know my whereabouts, showed empathy and helped me to finish the reading materials and to complete the assignments.” [P10-F]

Another participant shared,

“While going through the reading materials, I sometimes could not understand some topics. I shared the topics with fellow MOOC camp participants in the MOOC camp session. The fellow MOOC campers cleared topics for me, which was a good help for me to do the assigned tasks” [P15-M].

In line with a similar thought, a teacher [P14-F] informed that she encountered problems downloading video materials for a particular week. She tried to download the video several times but could not successfully download it. Next, one of the fellow MOOC campers helped her to overcome the technical issue. Doing MOOCs attending MOOC Camps

seemed like a team effort to the teachers. One of the participants stated,

“It would not be possible for me to complete MOOC unless I attended the MOOC camp. The support of my fellow-MOOCers was incredible. The mutual support helped us to learn the best from the MOOCs” [P17-F].

It resonated in others' voices too. They shared that the MOOC camp enabled them to work as a team. They were determined to help and support one another so that no one lagged and they could successfully finish the MOOC.

*4.2.2. Supported as a community of practice where the participants could discuss their best plans and practices.*

The MOOC camp helped them form a community that became a professional hub. A participant of the MOOC camp reported,

“To me, one of the best parts of MOOC camp is to get acquainted with teachers of different levels from different educational institutions. I could develop professional networking of teachers, which would never be possible if I had not joined the MOOC camp”.

Of the MOOC camp, another participant [P12-F] stated,

“One thing that I appreciate as a great opportunity is sharing... When any puzzling topic/s emerged, we discussed them. All teachers shared their understanding of the topic/s. It was good to know others' perspectives on the topic/s. Thus, I learned a lot from our group.”

One of the MOOC camp participants said that she primarily benefitted from fellow teachers' practical application of the knowledge. She reported,

“I could develop my teaching practice when I knew how other MOOC campers implemented the knowledge learnt from the MOOC camps in in-person classes of them... “[P6-F].

*4.2.3. Served as a supporting platform for the online content of MOOCs.*

The MOOC camp served as a supporting platform for the online content of the MOOCs. The weekly face-to-face meeting helped the participants understand the online content in a better way... [P11-M]. The offline discussion of the online content enabled us to go beneath the surface and to have the best out of the crucial ideas. [P13-M]. One teacher said she completed a MOOC by herself, which seemed to her a bit tedious and boring. On the contrary, MOOC camp made the lonely, boring journey fun and enjoyable.

#### 4.3. Notable changes participants mentioned

Throughout ten weeks, participants attended two MOOC camps, one on teacher trainers' professional development and the other on incorporating critical thinking skills while exploring the culture in the EFL context. During this period, teachers met each week and shared their understanding of the materials, lessons learnt, and how they implemented the new knowledge and skills gained from the MOOCs in the classroom. Completing the MOOCs by attending the MOOC Camps, they reported several changes: they could develop their cultural awareness and skills; improve classroom environment and critical thinking skills; enhance classroom interaction. Some of the teachers also mentioned that MOOCs helped them make needs analysis and craft training according to the needs of the teachers, helped improve the teacher community by cascading sessions, and supported expanding professional networking and facilitating reflective teaching.

##### 4.3.1. *Developed cultural awareness and skills*

One participant stated,

“My students along with me have developed awareness of different cultural issues on regions, religions, casts, creeds, etc. We could develop intercultural awareness” [P5-M].

Another teacher shared that after application of the ideas learnt from MOOC, learners developed skills to deal with problems that arise from cultural differences [P2-F].

A female participant [P4-F] mentioned,

“After completing the MOOC on Integrating Critical Thinking Skills, I developed awareness about cultural and intercultural issues. Resultantly, I tried to plan my lessons in a way that my learners could also develop cultural and intercultural awareness, behave responsibly, and respect one another's values and traditions. They were found careful not only of the traits of their native culture but also of the foreign cultures.”

##### 4.3.2. *Improved classroom environment and critical thinking skills*

One of the teachers [P8-F] mentioned,

“Learners in my class developed their understanding about cultural differences and thus developed understanding among themselves as well.”

When students came to know what one considers wrong in his view can be right in another culture, they developed a mutual respect. They stopped bullying or humiliating others which helped improve the classroom environment [P4-F].

Another teacher reported,

“When I facilitated different activities on critical thinking skills learnt from MOOCs, it enabled learners to improve their analytical skills of complex issues. They learnt to evaluate issues from different perspectives” [P16-F].

### *4.3.3. Made classroom more interactive*

One of the MOOC camp participants shared,

“With the new knowledge and skills I gained after completing the MOOCs, I could give learners the tasks that facilitated more interaction in class.” [P10-F].

Another teacher reported,

“As learners gave their opinions after knowing about their roles as critical thinkers, they were more active and vocal in the classroom. So, the classroom changed into a more interactive one” [P1-M].

### *4.3.4. Helped make needs analysis and craft training according to the needs of the teachers*

A teacher stated,

“While organizing any teacher training program, I never wanted to know the needs of the teachers. Instead, I just facilitated training on a topic that I thought was important for them. This way of facilitating teacher training was not much effective. However, the course on Professional Development for Teachers Trainers helped me realize that it was important to know teachers' needs before deciding to facilitate training on any particular topic. .... Well, the course enriched me with the knowledge of analyzing the teacher's needs for their training requirements” [P12-F].

The same voice is heard from other teachers as well.

“I have begun to understand that I need to know first what teachers' needs are in real” [P8-F]. “When I knew what training teachers need, it helped me craft training sessions according to their needs when I arranged cascading session “[P10-M].

### *4.3.5. Helped improve teacher community by cascading sessions*

The cascading sessions facilitated by the MOOC camp participants supported the development of the teacher community. According to the expectation of the U.S. Embassy,

“I, along with two of my fellow-MOOCers, arranged a cascading session for the EFL teachers of my institutions and the neighboring ones. We shared our takeaways from the courses with the teachers. There was a question-and-answer session for the participants in the cascading session. It worked as a good learning and view exchange session. We decided there that we would meet at regular intervals to share our teaching practices and work as a community of practice.” [P16-F]

Another teacher from the MOOC camp participants opined,

“It was not the fact that only I was benefitted by the MOOCs, my fellow teachers could also improve their teaching practices when I shared my gained knowledge with them.” [P13-M].

#### *4.3.6. Supported expanding professional networking and facilitating reflective teaching*

It is observed that the teachers in Bangladesh most often need to remain busy with teaching and with other official tasks. They do not have much scope for professional networking though professional networking is a must for teachers. It helps them come across veteran teachers. The early career professionals can know from them the challenges teachers face and ways of overcoming them. One of the MOOC camp participants shared,

“By the cascading sessions, I could expand my professional network and was able to come in contact with the teachers who are also keen to develop their learning and teaching practices” [P14-F].

Another teacher opined,

“This professional networking helped me to meet the fellow-teachers who were experienced in dealing with the contextual challenges that occasionally emerge.” [P7-M].

## **5. Discussion**

The participants of this research were from diverse schools, colleges, and universities in urban areas. Moreover, they did not belong to the older generation but were relatively younger. Even after that, they faced technological and technical issues while doing the MOOC. That MOOCers face technological and procedural issues also surfaced in Mabuan's (2020) study in the Philippines. So, the challenges are more or less similar in most of the world's developing countries. As teachers are involved in full-time jobs, managing time for doing a MOOC or attending MOOC camp is difficult for many of them. In their research, Shapiro, Lee, Roth, Li, Çetinkaya-Rundel, and Canelas (2017) also stated that lack of time for doing MOOCs was a strong barrier to the successful completion of the MOOCs even for the students.

Though MOOCs are relatively new in the context of Bangladesh, the usefulness of MOOCs has been explored and tested in many countries across the world i.e., the Philippines (Mabuan & Ebron, 2018, Mabuan, 2020; Malaysia (Fadzil, Latif, & Munira, 2015), India (Jain, Gopalakrishnan, Mehra, Kannegal, Upadhyay, Pankaj, & Baxi, 2014), Romania (Malita, Tiru, & Grosseck, 2018), Morocco (Manar, 2016), New Zealand (Gordon, Peters, & Besley, 2014), and some other European countries (Jansen & Schuwer, 2015).



The conveniences of the MOOC camp have also been substantiated by research in Philippines (Mabuan & Ebron, 2018; Mabuan, 2020). Moreover, the vitality of MOOCs has been investigated in different contexts, such as human resource training, higher education, and teachers' professional development (Savino, 2014; Mabuan & Ebron, 2018; Hasser, 2017).

The social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), and connectivism (cf. Downes, 2008; Siemens, 2005), which postulate the "transformative possibilities offered by emerging technologies" (Bell, 2011) were the base of this study. The findings of this research upheld Bandura's (1977) belief that people learn and act by observing the behavior of the people around them by comparing and contrasting their manners and behaviors with those of others. Thus, they step forward for future courses of action. The notable changes in the participants that were reported in the results developed through mutual interaction, sharing experiences, knowledge and skills with one another. And the MOOC camps created the platform for the mentioned opportunities.

### **6. Conclusion**

Though there are some challenges in enrolling and completing MOOCs, teachers, with the help of technology, can bring forth manifold benefits both for the learners and their improvement. They can be a good provision for the continuous professional development of the teachers and can contribute significantly to the progress of the educational standard. In developing countries like Bangladesh, governments cannot ensure standard training programs for teachers because of numerous realities. Evidently, many teachers, especially those living in remote and peripheral areas, are deprived of training for professional advancement, where MOOCs and MOOC camps can play a vital role in developing their skills and expertise. Like the 'alternative educational arrangements' seen in COVID-19 (Alam, Asmawi, Fatema, Ullah, & Azad, 2022), MOOCs can be an alternate system of CPD. As they are free and anyone can enroll and access these courses from any part of the country, teachers with internet access can improve them by registering for their required discipline from the Massive Open Online Courses.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A Information of the Participants

Participants	Gender	Level	Teaching Experience	Name of the Institutions
1	Male	Secondary	Seven years	Cantonment Public School and College
2	Female	Higher Secondary	Eleven years	OMAR Gani MES College
3	Male	Secondary	Five years	Halishohor Cantonment Public School and College
4	Female	Secondary	Ten years	Full-bright School
5	Male	Secondary	Nine years	Cantonment English School and College
6	Female	Tertiary	Three years	Cox's Bazar International University
7	Male	Secondary	Five Years	Cambrian School and College Chittagong
8	Female	Higher Secondary	Twelve years	College of Science Business and Humanities
9	Male	Secondary	Three years	South Asian School
10	Female	Secondary	Five years	Halishohor Cantonment Public School and College
11	Male	Secondary	Seven years	Chittagong Govt. High School
12	Female	Tertiary Level	Three Years	International Islamic University Chittagong
13	Male	Secondary	Three years	Cambrian School and College Chittagong
14	Female	Tertiary Level	One Year	International Islamic University Chittagong
15	Male	Secondary	Five years	Presidency International School
16	Female	Secondary	Three Years	Principal Fazal Ahmed International School and College
17	Male	Secondary	Five years	Asian Abashik School and College

### Appendix B

Questions for semi-structured interview:

1. What are the difficulties teachers face in taking MOOCs?
  - i) Did you face any technological or technical problems in doing MOOC? If yes, could you please share about them?
  - ii) What challenges did you encounter while enrolling for the MOOC?
  - iii) Did you face any problem in managing time from your busy schedule to do the MOOC? Could you please talk about it?
2. What are the conveniences of taking MOOCs by attending camps?
  - i) Could you please tell me if MOOC camp was helpful for you?
  - ii) How did the MOOC camp help you in completing the MOOC?
  - iii) Could you please share with me how you were benefitted by MOOC camp?

3. What are the notable changes in teachers' practice after the completion of the MOOCs?
  - i) Now that you have completed the MOOC, would you please tell me if there are changes in your teaching practices after doing the MOOC?
  - ii) Could you please share about cascading knowledge such as your experience about it and the impact of cascading session on you and others.
  - iii) Did the MOOC camp help you in professional networking? If yes, could you please make any comment about this.