

# Review: “Exemplifying Computational Thinking Scenarios in the Age of COVID-19: Examining the Pandemic’s Effects in a Project-Based MOOC”

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The article “*Exemplifying Computational Thinking Scenarios in the Age of COVID-19: Examining the Pandemic’s Effects in a Project-Based MOOC*” describes a project-based MOOC designed to teach a wide variety of STEM students “computational thinking.” This course was being conducted during the initial outbreak of COVID-19 and thus has some really interesting data relating to the uptake in student enrollment as well as a focus on students choosing projects based on COVID-19.

In addition to the COVID-19 data, I found two aspects of the article to be particularly interesting. First, the article describes teaching a “computational thinking” course without teaching programming. This is the first time I have seen this type of idea implemented in an entire course. I am very interested in learning the pros and cons to teaching “Computational Thinking” in this way. The second thing I noticed about this article is that the course is being taught as a project-based MOOC to around 1000 students. This seems like a lot of work and I would be curious to learn more about how the course was scaled. In particular, how were that many projects organized and graded (peer grading, team grading something else)? What other things did the instructors do to help scaling?

Overall, I thought this article was well written and is a great addition to the COVID-19 special issue. Although I would like to see more details about no-programming “Computational Thinking” and scaling project based MOOCs, I think the authors made a reasonable discussion leaving these topics out given the length limitation.

Unfortunately, it looks to me like even more needs to be cut. There is a 3000-word limit for CiSE department articles, with each figure/table counting as 250 words. Given that, we need to work with the authors to try and cut another 1300 words from the current draft.