

**Designing Learner-Centric MOOCs**  
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**Lecture 03**  
**Learner Engagement**

## Learner Engagement

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe:** So the question now I have is that when these are the advantages and we saw that multiple people had multiple point of views before joining the course, and there were very positive reasons why we should join. So if that is the motivation of people joining, then why the completion is not so high?

**Dr. Jayakrishnan:** I think completion has a lot of dependency. The completion rate as they call it has a lot of dependency on the number of entry points. Now when a resource is available so open, it is natural that most people will try to have a look at it and they will come in...

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer:** No, but even if you think about the MOOCs that you yourself have enrolled for and you have completed...

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - And because of the flexibility...

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - Yes, so I have enrolled for more MOOCs than I have completed myself, and one reason for that is that you were ambitious at the time of enrollment, that you are attracted, you feel you want to learn that, and so you say I will enroll, and later on priorities change, and you that, ok look, or you get a little bit out of it or you are willing to run with it. So that has been the issue for me.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - How many will agree with this point that when we look at a MOOC title or even abstract, we expect some range and we already know that because it is open and flexible, we have a chance of skipping something. Now, when the actual MOOCs starts we decide the otherwise, we actually skip a lot and only keep a fraction of it like what we wanted to do. May be probably people have a look at only... So I am coming to the point.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – No, so I have an analogy here. To me, looking at a series of courses available in a MOOC or a bunch of MOOC platforms is like browsing a book shop. So I am browsing bookshop and I buy a bunch of books. I read a little bit of many of them

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** – I cannot even buy any book. I just walk out, just read lot of book there itself.

**Dr. Jayakrishnan** – So, I buy books but it takes a lot of time to complete that book.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - But do you read every book, every word? So, the analogy to me works that you are interested in the topic, you want to kind of browse through it, get a feel for it...

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - ...and then you keep it back if you don't like it. Going by the same analogy, now if the book store guy says that the books are for free, just take whatever you want and you can also browse.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - So the book store will appear in your house.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** – No so, beyond a point my house will start getting cluttered and I will be more careful.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - Books back into the store.

**Dr. Jayakrishnan** - I think there also I carefully choose the books. I mean for me if there is genre. Let's say it's fiction or let's say it's biographies, so I will just select the books.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** – My house is my book store.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - It works in a way that people will still take but not read is exactly my point...

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – So, I won't take books that I know for sure that I won't read.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - You are one of the samples who will be choosy while taking...

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - But if you think there is a chance I might read it, you might pick it up. There is higher likelihood you might pick it up if it's free.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – Yeah, there is a higher likelihood.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - If you are not going to read it there is no way because it will be junk and that's a bigger problem.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – Correct.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** – So, the owner allows you to just tear out a chapter and go home

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** – I will not destroy books.

**Dr. Jayakrishnan** – It is like someone allows you to xerox one chapter of a book.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** – I am saying it is where knowledge taking is more modular in nature and you would love to...

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** – Actually, you know what I would like? If I knew that the book store was close to my house and I could go whenever I wanted to, I would just go there, read what I wanted to, have a coffee and come back, because the atmosphere is also pleasant. It's not the book as much as the whole experience and access to it.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – So, I think the book analogy we can move, but I think we are done with that analogy, right?

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - Yeah, and this is the MOOC is a book store, it's that analogy. Now the other thing the MOOC is a class.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** – Yes, this is the other analogy, where the connect is the important thing.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** – Ok, I have a different reason ok . I mean I agree with this reason also but my reason comes now from the interaction and human perspective. So I am not making an analogy with a book store, because to me MOOC is not, I mean it's more of a living thing, it's more like my fitness classes. Why? So I go for multiple fitness classes. The ones where there are fewer people, I know the teacher and I know my fellow participants, ok. There is a little bit of a responsibility towards them. It's like I know they are expecting me to come. Nobody will yell at me but if nobody shows up and the teacher's alone I feel bad and if all of us go, the class is a wonderful class, you know because it's not just the teacher or it's not just one on one. On the other hand, I recently just dropped out of a class which was happening in IIT. There were 70 people, ok and I didn't know the teacher, and I didn't like the teacher, that was a separate thing and it was so impersonal and she was just doing her own thing and there were some students who were great and I was just trying to emulate them but there was no connect for me in that class at all so I don't know. So I don't know if that's just the massiveness or the lack of connect.

**Dr. Sameer Sahasrabudhe** - Connect is the point I think.

**Prof. Sridhar Iyer** - So the connect is the important thing. I mean you have to either connect to the instructor or to other people in the class. I mean there has to be that feeling of togetherness.

**Prof. Sahana Murthy** - Yeah and the feeling that 'I matter', either I matter in some way, that somebody cares about my learning or my presence or... I mean that's what happens to the... I mean even in college when the attendance became non-mandatory, either it was that "ok, if I don't go to class I can't pass the exam". That was one motivation. Can't pass the exam or I really want to learn this something but there was also this thing that look that if I show up then there is somebody who is noticing it. And that was both a nice thing as well as a responsibility.