



SCRIPT OF TALK

TITLE: **What is Inside a MooC Interactions**

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NARRATION:

Hi!! My name is Prabhakar, I'm with IIT-Kanpur. In this lecture let us look at interactions that happen in a mooc. We have seen that and mooc has the multiple aspects to it at the bottom we have the educational resources and then we have interactions so I'm going to talk about what kind of interactions happen in a mooc and how are they important. Interactions are a very very important aspect of Mooc. In the regular course we meet students face to face and there is larger number of interactions that happen in the classroom when the instructor is giving a talk or outside the classroom in the corridor over a cup of tea and have these actually constitute a huge amount of learning for the student and also for the teacher but when you go online. These interactions are not available and they are actually substituted by online interactions. This course often gets enriched by the participants, knowledge of the participants on the subject, the questions they ask the interesting answers the students come up with so interactions are very critical for the success of the course. Actually, in cMoocs as we have seen interactions constitute the moocs okay so what are the interaction mechanisms that are there when we go online. Ofcourse, the first one and the foremost one is a forum. A forum is where the students or anybody the instructor is even may ask a question and then whenever you are free you can go and look at the question and answer the question. The interaction is synchronous because it's a synchronous it is very convenient. I don't need to be online and to find out that the question has been asked and is being discussed. The history of all the questions will be there I can see all the answers so it's a very easy to use extremely powerful mode of interaction typically these interactions what we call them threads of interaction. They form into multiple groups you may have a thread running for the whole course or for each lecture, you may have an individual thread or sometimes there is a topic which has been

started by somebody which will form its own thread. So, there are threads of interactions and so forums are the basic and very useful form of interaction that happens in a moocs.

The next kind of interaction that is there is what we call Hangout or a chat session. So, this is a synchronous event that means everybody goes to one place which is an online place. Let's say a chat room and the instructor for example could announce I'm going to be there on Tuesday 8 p.m. So, whoever is available will come into the chat room and they can ask a question and the instructor will be able to answer the question immediately there are issues with chat rooms because if it is a textual chat then it is easy to scale up but if you are in Audio Video Chat then there are scalability issues can't have a very large number of users simultaneously asking questions and there are technology and bandwidth issues. Also moderating chat rooms becomes difficult because a large number of questions may be pouring in simultaneously so we need a moderator who will possibly screen the questions or prioritize them all or sometimes the users themselves will vote. Let's discuss this question and so on. But it's again a very powerful medium chat room because your questions get answered immediately and then you can follow up that question with subsequent one and so on. So, that is the second form of interaction that we see in online courses in Moocs. Social media is a very powerful media to interact and all of us know about Facebook, Twitter and so on. These are also heavily used in online courses for example people might start a group on their own let's say for this course we may have a group called mooc on moocs and you can you will have a wall and then you can connect with other students who are engaged in this course and you can continue the discussion that might have started in the face group outside or actually take it forward in and different direction all together. The experience shows that often people form a facebook group on their own set of people might get together and say let's say there are some people working from Nepal they will have their own facebook group for a mooc on mooc and they will try to build a network to exchange information and benefit from each other's experience. So facebook groups are again very very popular and common. You could also have people exchanging information on twitter there could be a twitter handle created by somebody and then you tweet things about the course especially major events assignment new or new videos

released or something like that or even ask a question. So, twitter is another way to interact in a mooc of course people could write blogs and elaborate on some aspect so you have a blog somewhere, were you have elaborated about let us say a particular issue and then you can tweet that url to the course or announce that in discussion group in the forum or on the facebook page so people can go there and look at it. Now, wiki is another very powerful way. Wiki help you to co-create content and let's say we are trying to solve a problem together and I've put together I'm trying to design a solution for a particular scenario and I have some ideas and I create a wiki page and then people can come and who are better informed who know more about space and technology can come edit it and improve the content and wikis are also used to gather definition that are used to help people who are not familiar with and so on. So, wiki is a very powerful way to interact in a mooc. So, moocs interactions there are lots of studies that have happened on how people interact in moocs. I have given one reference here there are some interesting points from this paper actually let's see what they say so it's the study which was done on interactions that have happened in many courses in coursera. Coursera is as you know is a company which offers moocs so some of the observations are like this apparently, the participation of student in moocs in forums. Here, in this case which I'm calling interactions most students participate in frequently they are not regularly asking questions and answering them.

Another, point that they found out was posting and viewing happens to be in bursts suddenly there is a peak and then there is a time of quietness and again it goes up. And this suppose to coincide with whenever there is an event happening for example a new video has been released or quiz has been announced or some assignment is due or the beginning of the course suddenly there is huge amount of activity most apparently activity happens in the beginning or at events in the course this is again very interesting interactions among students happens in the amongst those who are in the same time zone so people tend to form all geographical groups those who are in same let's say country tends to form interaction groups inside the forum so a question asked by a person is most likely to be answered by another student from the same country let's say so that is again a very interesting point of view. It's probably because when the

question comes at a time which is most suited for the time zone the other students are online and after some time it becomes stale so you may not want to do much to it but this is not to say others do not answer but we're talking about percentages. This is again a very interesting observation participation is dominated by people who received very high or very low final marks so it's probably not difficult to understand those students who are not very active probably know a lot about the subject and they are answering questions or even probing further by asking questions and they would get very high marks and often those who get very low marks in the final months in the final analysis my reading is not substantiated by statistics is not because they do not know but because they get busy with other things and probably do not finish the course all they get diverted to other things but very often they are well versed with the subject. But I guess it requires a little more analysis but the point is a large number of students who must participate actively in this discussion seem to fall in terms of marks obtained at either end of the spectrum so you can go and look at these references and pursue them if you are more interested in this.

Thank you