

# MOOCs, a revolution in education?

joint dissemination event, Sofia University &  
HANDSON project  
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**HANDS-ON**



**Welten Institute**

Research Centre for Learning, Teaching and Technology



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# Agenda

1. a few introductory remarks
2. interactive workshop
  1. I list five claims often made about MOOCs
  2. you discuss each one in several small groups
  3. groups report back to all
3. wrapping up the session



# Introduction

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- names associated with first MOOCs  
Dave Cormier, George Siemens and  
Stephen Downs, all from Canada
- the first MOOC was called *Connectivism  
and Connective Knowledge (CCK08)*
- there were later editions (CCK09), and  
other courses Future of Education,  
LAK11, LAK12



- in 2011, Sebastian Thrun (Stanford) and Peter Norvig (Google) did an open AI course, which attracted lots of students
- venture capital was quick to fund spin-offs: Udacity (Stanford), Coursera (Stanford)
- also not-for-profits, e.g. edX (MIT & Harvard), Khan Academy (Salman Khan)



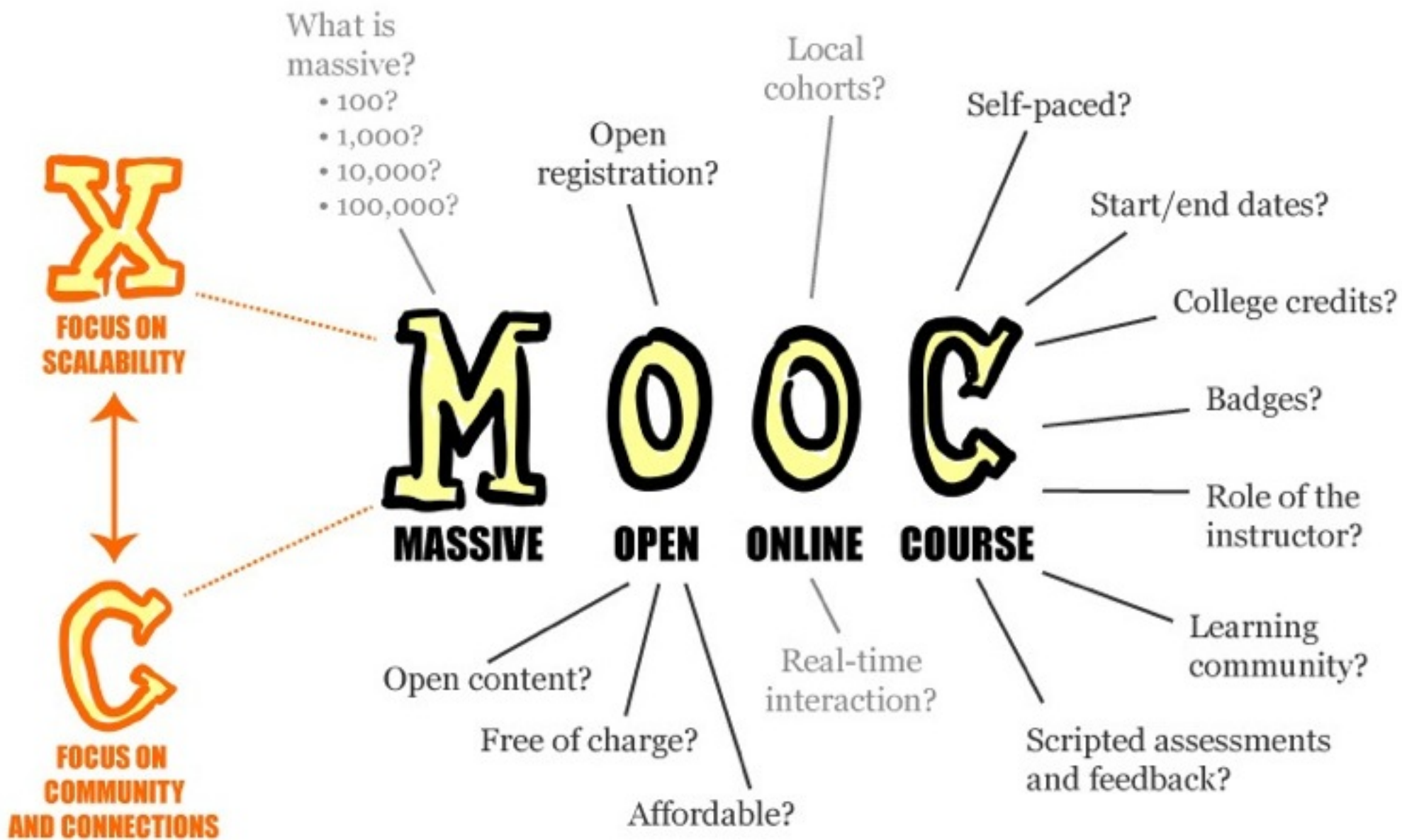
- the New York Times called 2012 the year of the MOOC
- universities around the world joined the existing platforms
- new platforms were founded (Futurelearn, Miríada X, OpenEd, ...)



- Apart from the hype, should we jump the MOOC bandwagon? Do they make a valuable contribution to the educational toolbox?
- This I want to evaluate with you. Obviously there is no straightforward 'yes' or 'no'







M ♦ O ♦ O ♦ C

Every letter is negotiable.



# Courses?

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- *enrol; fixed time slot; fixed topic; teacher/tutor/moderator; institutional backing*
- **course the best format? (professional development versus initial education)**
- **should one always enrol? (allow lurking)**
- **should one fix the time period and pace?**



# Online

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- *everything done via online interactions (videos, forum discussions, assessment)*
- **blended form of learning, mixing offline and online? (practical issues)**



- *cMOOCs (socio-constructivist or connectivist) versus xMOOCs (instructivist)*
- what about innovative pedagogy (didactics)? (transformation versus substitution)



# Open

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- *free for everyone who registers*
- for free is not open? (CC license; teachers need to get permission to use MOOC materials)
- how do venture capitalists recoup their investments? (business model: use your data, pay for certificate, ....)



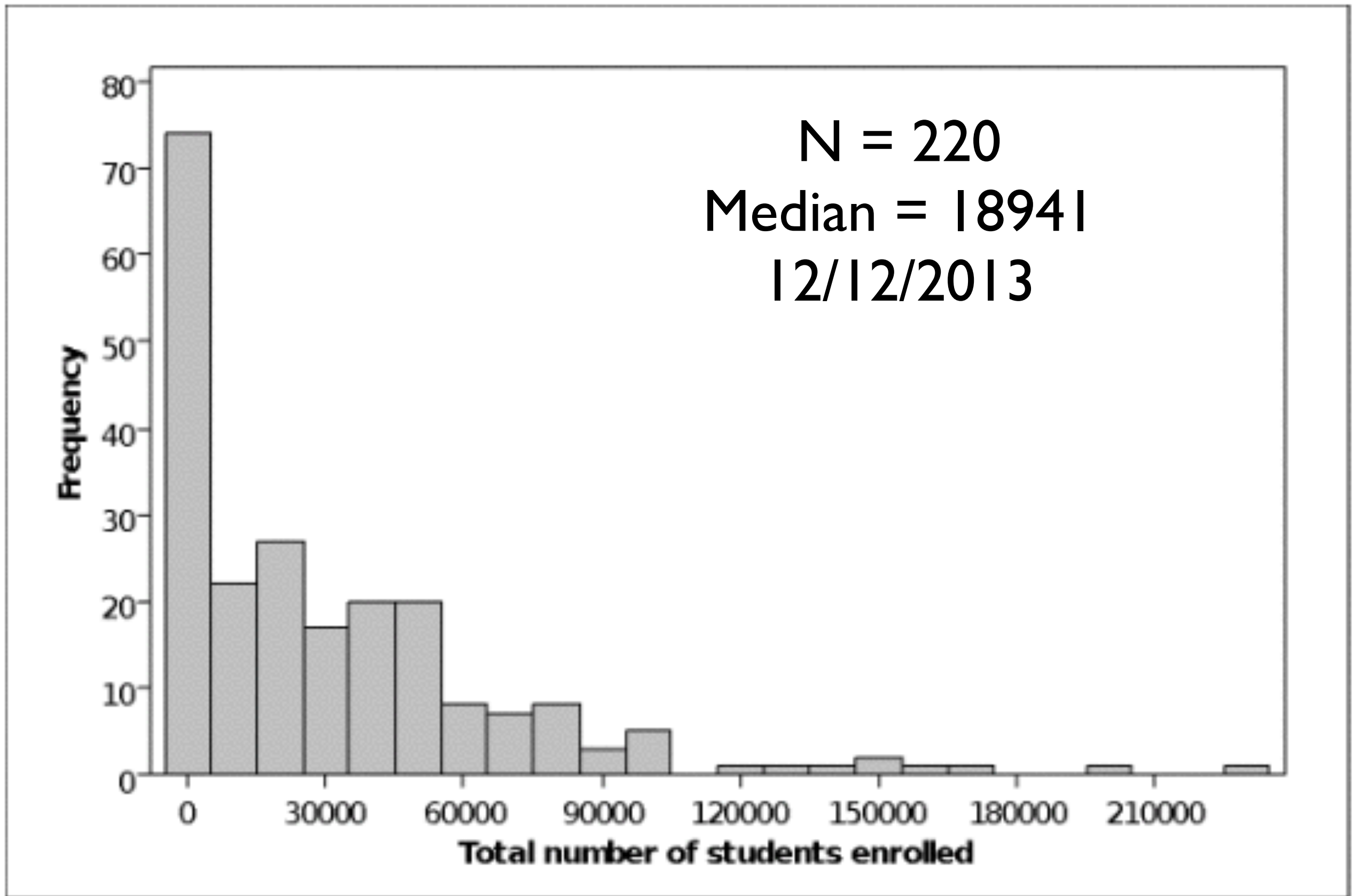
# Massive

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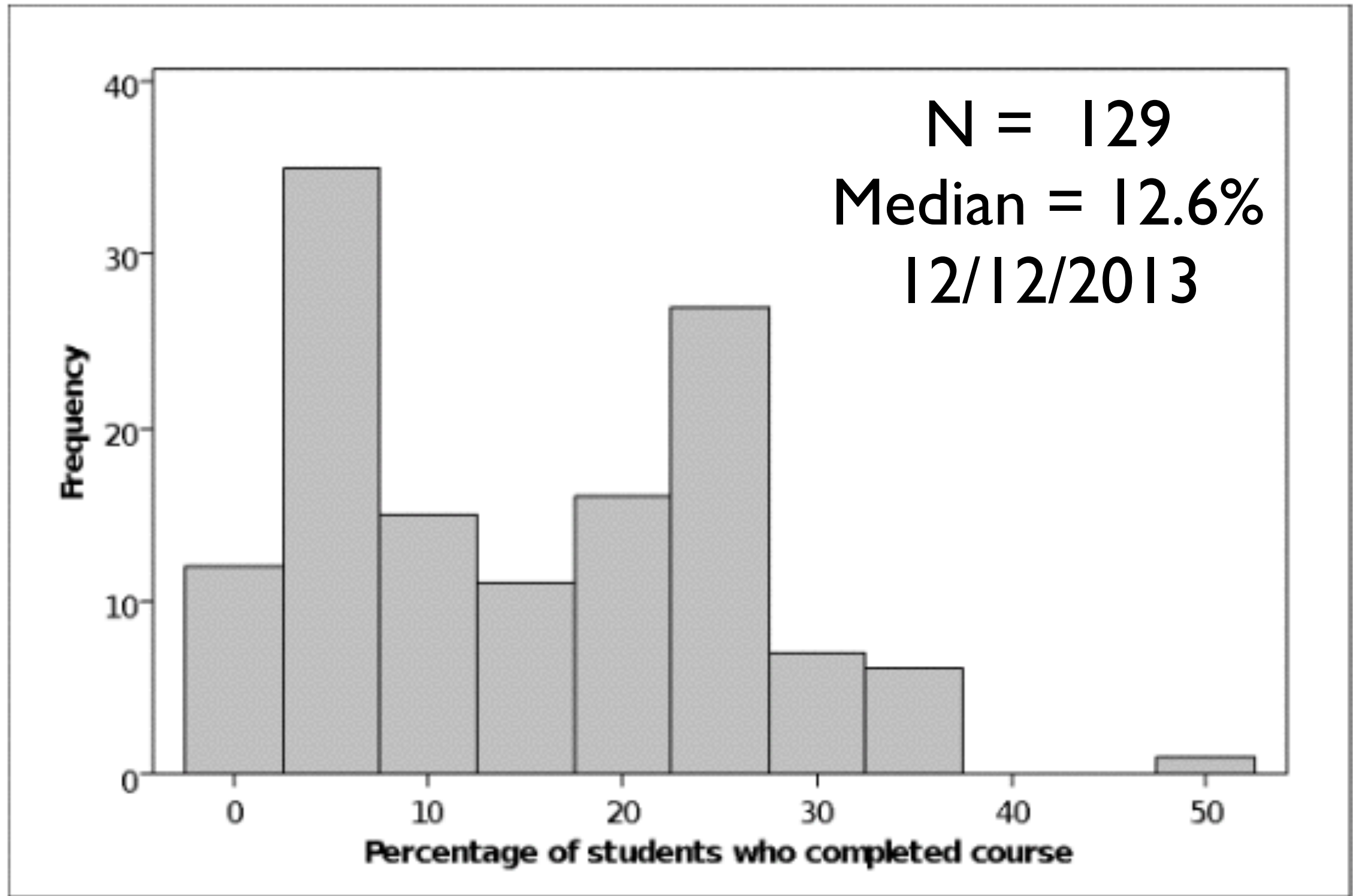




Katy Jordan: <http://moocmoocher.wordpress.com>

- does 'develop once, use many times' work for MOOCs (historical link with learning objects and open courseware)
- can MOOCs profit from the internet phenomenon (lower transaction cost, compare music and film industry)
- is drop-out a problem? (see picture)





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# Democratising education

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- do MOOCs make high-quality education available to all? (language, culture)
- do we need only 10 top-notch universities in the world? (Sebastian Thrun)
- do we applaud the privatisation of education? (venture capital involvement)



# Benefits of MOOCs

- ‘people’ have started to doubt the wisdom of the default pedagogy (‘lecturing’)
- the fruits of decades of TEL research are being rediscovered



# Thank you!



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