

# Regional Sections of Massively Open Online Courses

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Presentation to the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities

October, 2012

Massively Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and other “unbundled” educational content encourage a world community of learners and educators. Even limited experience with MOOCs indicates that local groups self-organize, meeting in coffee shops and libraries, to discuss and collaborate on MOOC material. This talk explores ways in which collocated institutions can cooperate in hosting more formalized regional “sections” of MOOCs, allowing students at these institutions, together with other MOOC-enrolled community members, to come together on MOOC materials, facilitated by faculty and other partners.

Regionally situated sections may bring special perspectives to the material, feeding into the MOOC’s world discourse. For example, a worldwide MOOC on *machine learning and optimization for environmental and societal sustainability* may have a theme of “What will ‘our’ region be like in 30 years?” A Nashville section with Vanderbilt, Fisk, TSU, Belmont, and David Lipscomb universities as partners could have a special focus on computing analysis of water resources, flood events and other regional concerns, with additional partners such as the Nashville Civic Design Center and the Richland Creek Watershed Alliance. While this example is sustainability related, possibly with community-based projects, regional sections of any MOOC would come with benefits.

Depending on model, regional sections of MOOCs would benefit members of the host institutions and other community members enrolled in the MOOC, and motivate MOOC creation by community partners that may then go worldwide. Importantly, ideas about regional section models will inform design and delivery of MOOCs themselves, which are still very much works in progress.