Reconsidering MOOC Completion Rates: THE INTENTION FACTOR
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MOOC completion rates are often calculated as the # of certificate earners divided by the total # of people who registered for a course.

But... many learners sign up for a MOOC without ever intending to complete it. Looking at HarvardX learners who took a pre-course survey* reveals a different picture.

In HarvardX courses, on average, of students who...
- intend to earn a certificate, 22% actually do so
- intend to browse a course, 6% go on to earn a certificate
- intend to audit a course, 7.5% go on to earn a certificate
- are unsure of their initial intentions, 10% go on to earn a certificate

THE TAKEAWAY: Students who intend to complete a course are 4.5 times more likely to do so than intended-browsers, and 3.5 times more likely to do so than intended-auditors.

* 28% of all registrants responded to our survey, 42% of active students responded, and 68% of students with a grade > 0 responded.