

# What Are Cultures of Learning?

Stephen Downes

ALT-C, Nottingham, UK

12 September 2013



My eBooks

Free Learning



Stephen Downes  
MAY 1997 / 2004 / 2010

Ed Radio



Current song: Unknown - 07 Let Me Love You  
Up  
Stream title: OLDaily Stream  
Bit rate: 128 kbps

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What Are Cultures of Learning?

September 12, 2013

Keynote presentation delivered to ALT-C, Nottingham, UK.

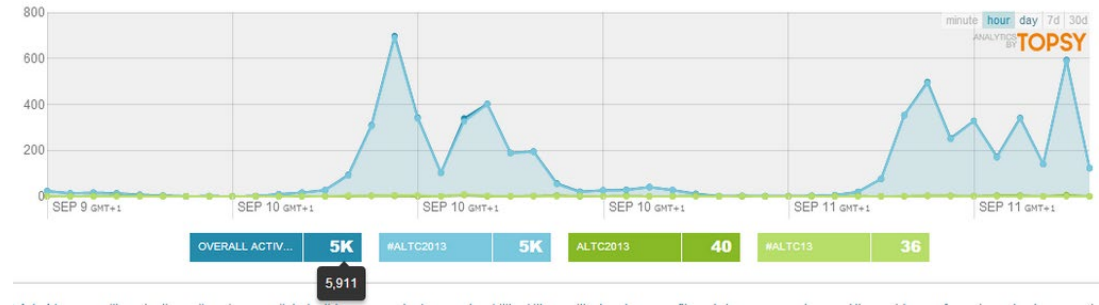
In the previous three days delegates will have explored all aspects of cultures of learning, ranging from digital literacies to learning landscapes, classroom environments, VLEs and open courses. But beyond examining the leaves and the trees, what can we say of the forest? A culture of learning – and for that matter, a learning culture – is composed of more than classes and schools and subjects, it is composed of the attitudes and enquiries of a culture of experimentation, curiosity, and quirkiness. In this closing keynote presentation, Stephen Downes will outline the framework of a culture of learning, identifying from examples and experiences the fundamental values that must be modeled and demonstrated by society's leaders, and will comment on implications to practice, research and policy.



Presentation page:

<http://www.downes.ca/presentation/326>

# Backchannel



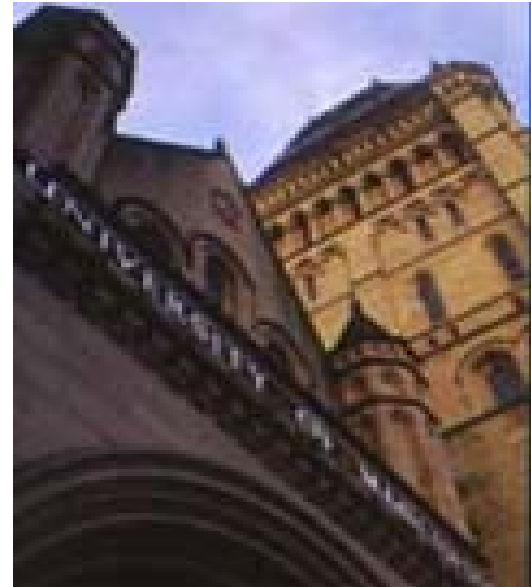
[www.downes.ca/chat](http://www.downes.ca/chat)

- or -

Tweet with #altc2013



## Exploring the frontiers of e-learning - borders, outposts and migration

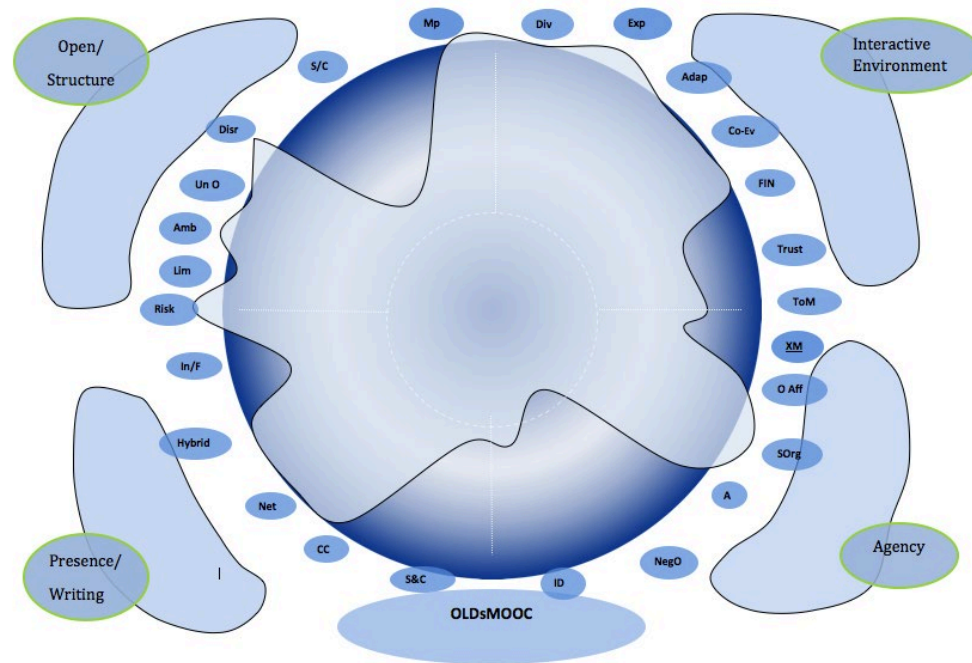


<http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2005/>

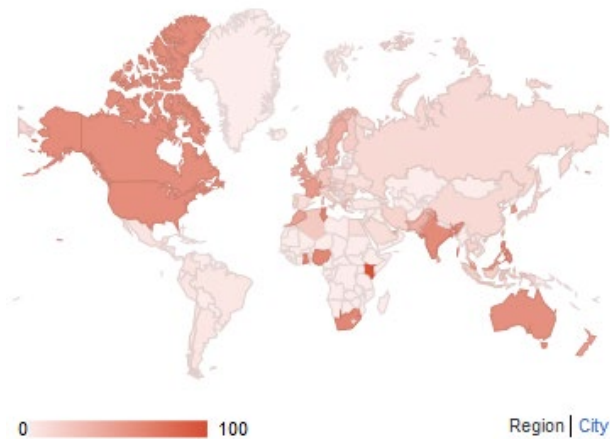
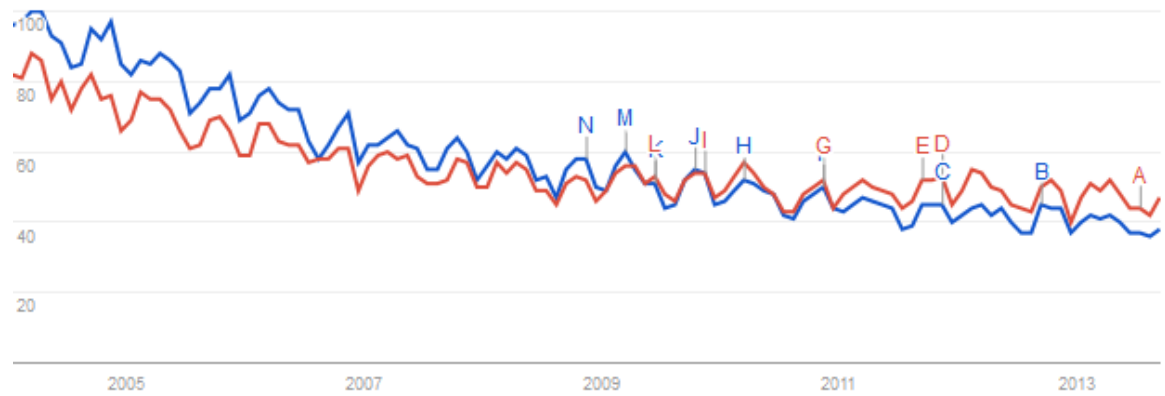


*How many of you would be here if you were not being paid by your employer?*

*‘Collaboration is the joining together of things that do not naturally want to be joined’, which drew audible sucking in of breath from the audience. (Mackness)*



# Collaboration



# Cooperation

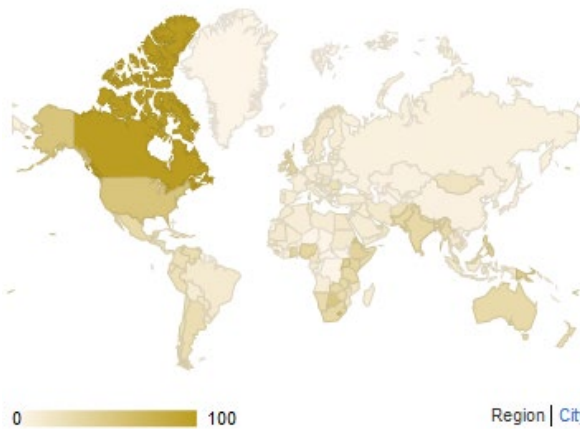
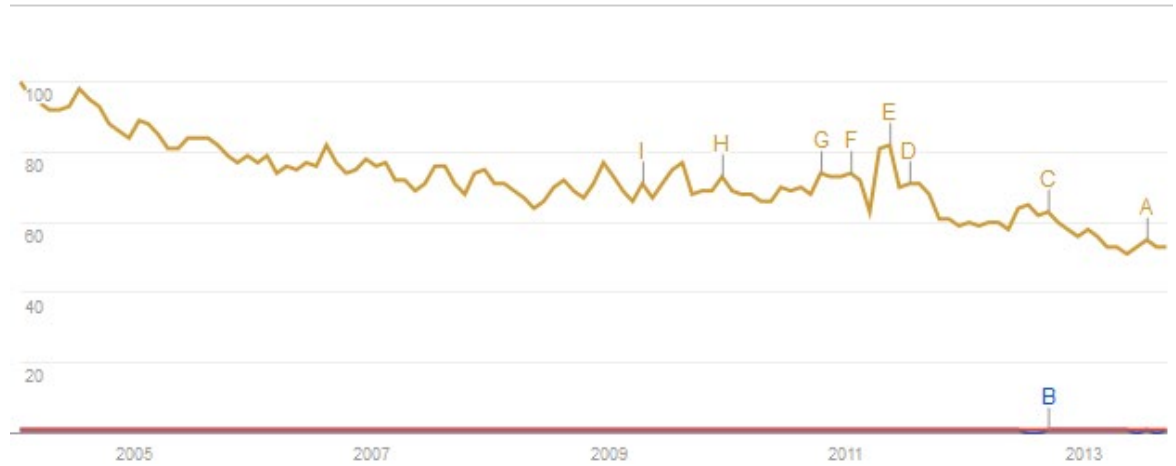


0 100

Region | City



# Network



# Progression of Networks

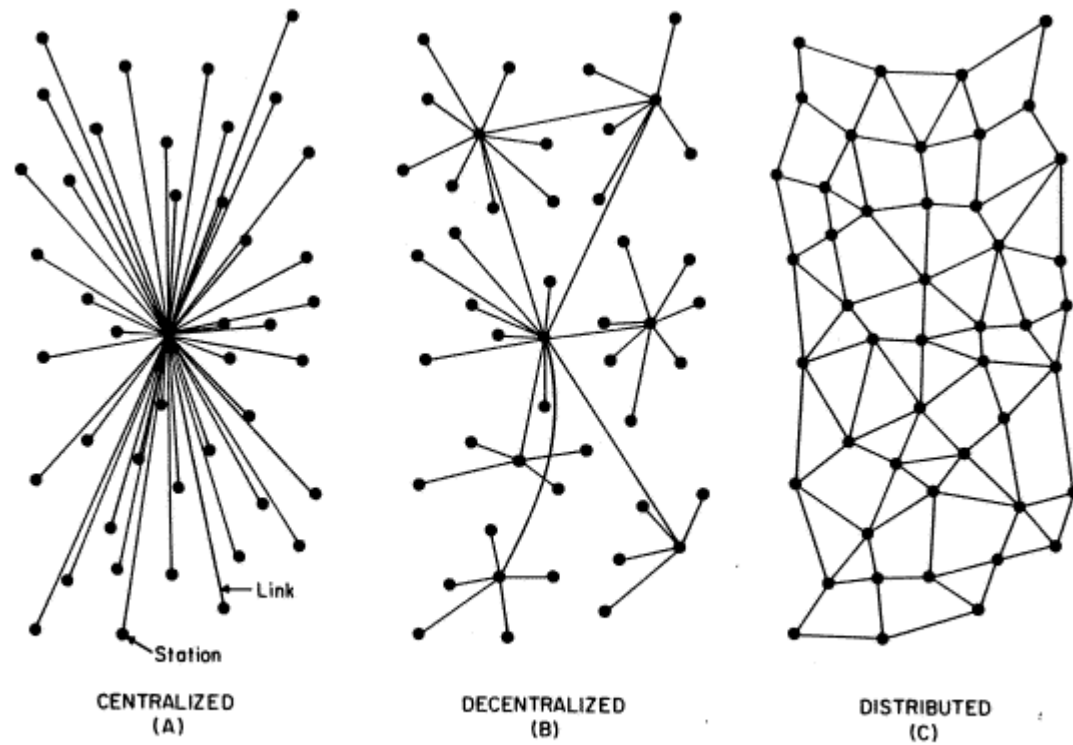
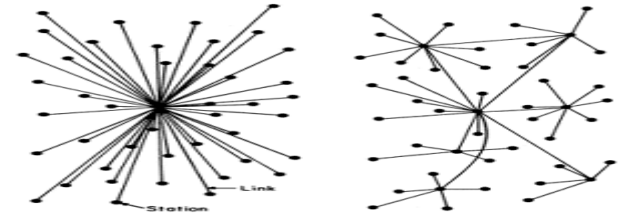


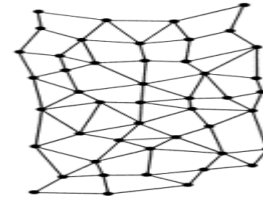
FIG. 1 - Centralized, Decentralized and Distributed Networks

# Types of Network

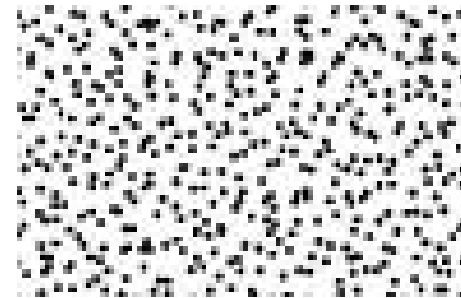
- Collaborative



- Cooperative



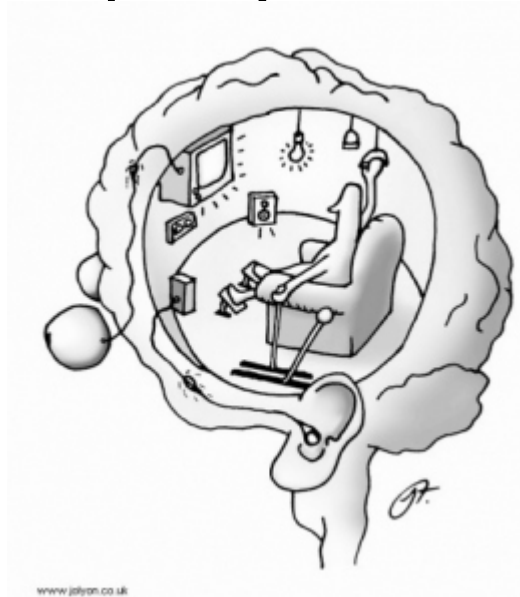
- Competitive



# Learning Cultures?

In the previous three days you have explored all aspects of cultures of learning, ranging from digital literacies to learning landscapes, classroom environments, VLEs and open courses.

- ‘Building New Cultures of Learning’ ???
- Ryle – category errors – the mistaking of a compositional property for an emergent property



# Learning Cultures?

In the previous three days you have explored all aspects of cultures of learning, ranging from digital literacies to learning landscapes, classroom environments, VLEs and open courses.



But beyond examining the leaves and the trees, what can we say of the forest?

# The MOOC



aka. Our effort to actually *demonstrate* the principles of learning we were talking about





## Talking With Seb

- Example – 7 million students need math remediation
- Would a MOOC be the answer?  
To the subset that is actively looking for the course
- What about the rest?

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJWLxoUniY0&list=UUAF9f1EcwVDM0\\_QkkAjeN3](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJWLxoUniY0&list=UUAF9f1EcwVDM0_QkkAjeN3)

# Change

"The notion of students as change agents is a relatively new concept."

-- Malcom Ryan



<http://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2013/04/029.html>

# Rachel Winston

Learning culture: students should be active participants in the learning process.

In the bulk of literature, student participation means making selections based on time and effort

Instead: involve and empower students in shaping the learning environment



## Why define engagement this way?

- because it's the right thing to do?
- offering an alternative to the consumer model of education (which reduces complex interactions to mere transactions)

# Rachel Winston (cont)

What does partnership look like?

- Just as academics are critical, and act to change things active students can do this too

- when that student graduates, she takes that ethos of responsibility into the wider world



# A Culture of Learning

A culture of learning – and for that matter, a learning culture – is composed of more than classes and schools and subjects.

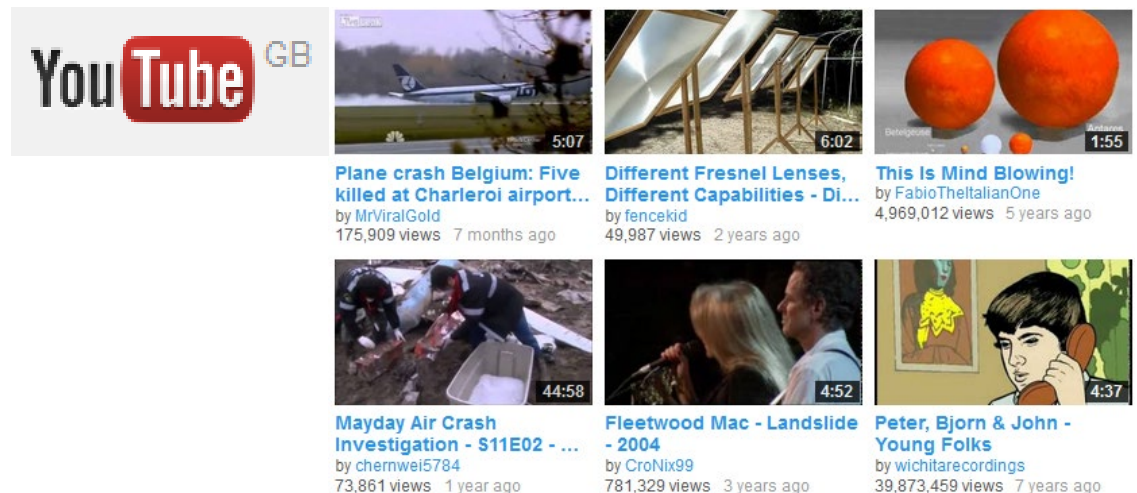
It is composed of the attitudes and enquiries of a culture of experimentation, curiosity, and **quirkiness**.

# SooperMOOC









Google [said yesterday](#) that it will develop software for [edX](#)...

...EdX, a nonprofit created by Harvard and MIT that solicits and distributes online courses for free... the idea is to spur development of so-called massive online open courses, building what edX's president told [Slate](#) could become '[a YouTube for MOOCs](#)'.



The image shows a screenshot of a YouTube search results page. On the left is the YouTube logo with 'GB' next to it. The main area displays six video thumbnails in a 2x3 grid. Each thumbnail includes a title, author name, view count, and upload time.

Thumbnail	Title	Author	Views	Time
	Plane crash Belgium: Five killed at Charleroi airport...	MrViralGold	175,909 views	5:07
	Different Fresnel Lenses, Different Capabilities - Di...	fencekid	49,987 views	6:02
	This Is Mind Blowing!	FabioTheItalianOne	4,969,012 views	1:55
	Mayday Air Crash Investigation - S11E02 - ...	chernwei5784	73,861 views	44:58
	Fleetwood Mac - Landslide - 2004	CroNix99	781,329 views	4:52
	Peter, Bjorn & John - Young Folks	wichitarecordings	39,873,459 views	4:37



The danger for them is that MOOCs will be:

- something that don't really resemble videos, and instead resemble RSS readers, and
- something created by learners for each other, rather than by publishers to be sold as consumables



### What is a MOOC?

by **dave cormier** • 2 years ago • 180,490 views

Written and Narrated by Dave Cormier Video by Neal Gillis Researchers Cormier Alexander McAuley George Siemens ...

HD

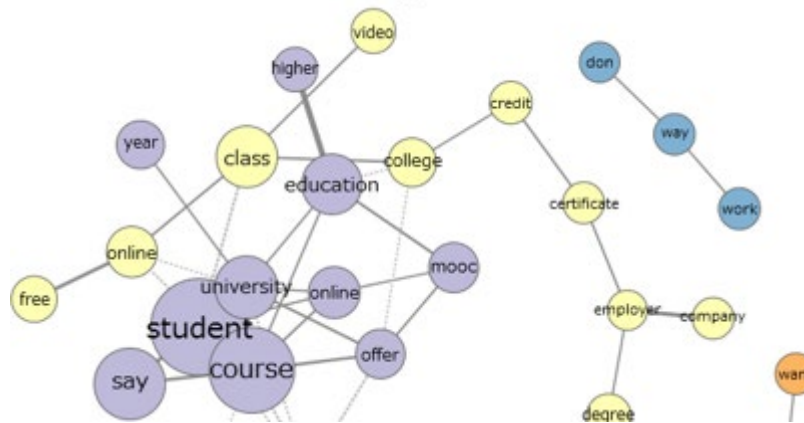


### Google Developers Live: Accessibility MOOC

by **GoogleDevelopers** • 1 day ago • 651 views

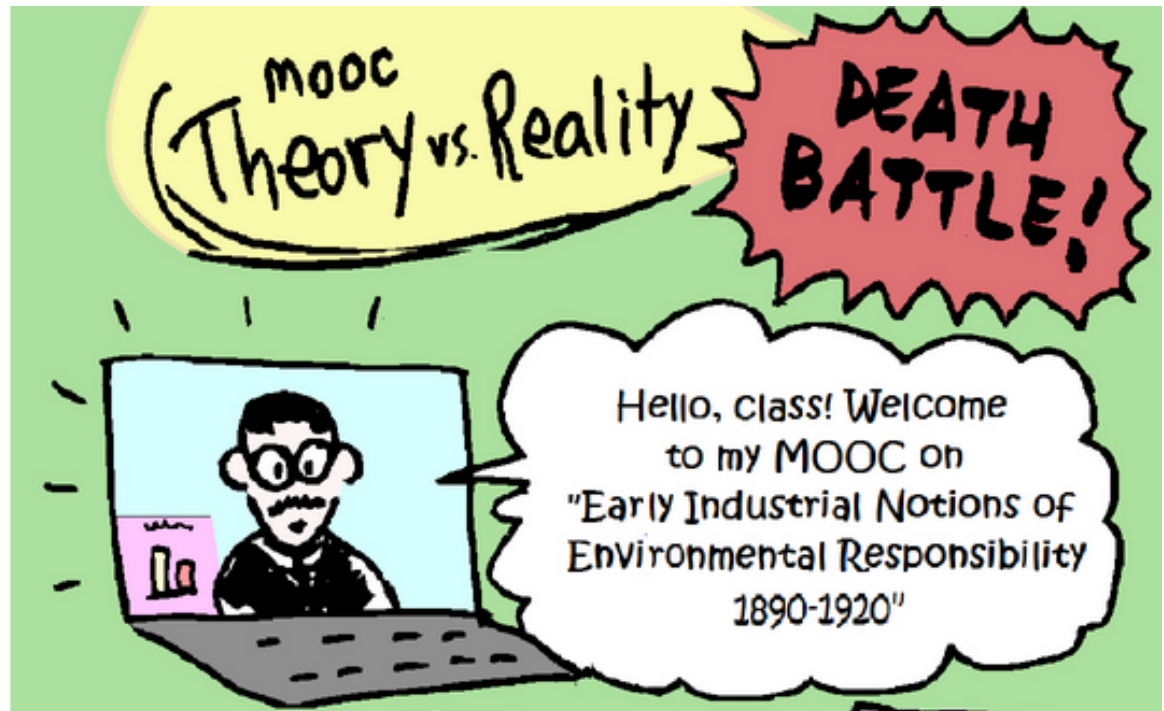
Sign up for Introduction to Web Accessibility at [g.co/webaccessibility](https://g.co/webaccessibility) to discover fast and simple ways to make your websites more

# David Kernohan



"*Open* was the first organ that we lost. From a nuanced and specific position in the world of the open educational resource, it is a word reduced to a synonym for two senses of free..."

# The Failure of MOOCs?



Let's start with a pop quiz to assess your current level of knowledge. You have 30 seconds to answer.

EARLY INDUSTRIALISTS WERE \_\_\_\_\_ REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENT.  
A) NAIVE  
B) IGNORANT  
C) CRIMINALLY NEGLIGENT

I see that 930 people have just left the class. Of the remaining 10,375, only 12% answered the question.

Thus ends the interactive portion of this course. Now sit back and relax while I lecture.

That was easy to call

9/13

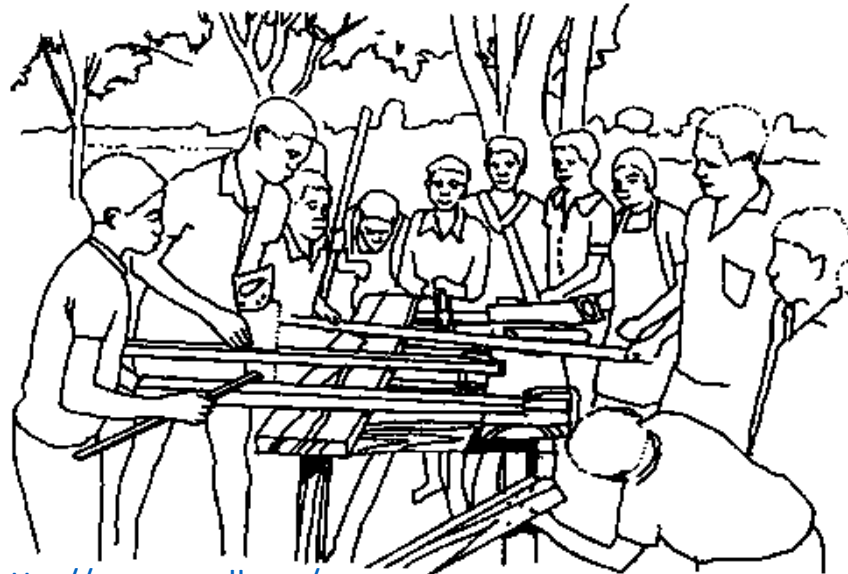
# John Clayton

- The 'deficit model' approach - "you are lacking and I will bring you up to speed" - is essentially a broadcast model, \*vs\*
- Empowerment model - based on learner reflection and decision-making on what \*they\* want to learn

We say we do this, but then we don't allow this to occur..

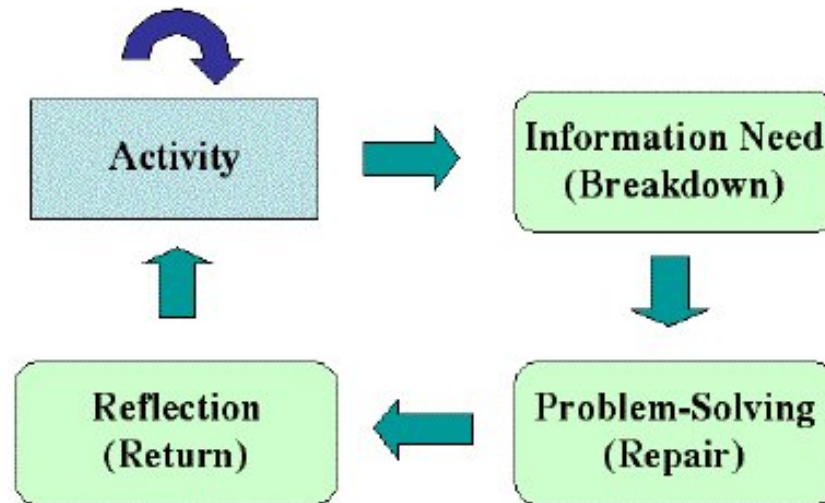
# Why Do MOOCs Fail?

- Because they're *courses*
- Because they try to do something *formal* in an environment that is essentially *informal*

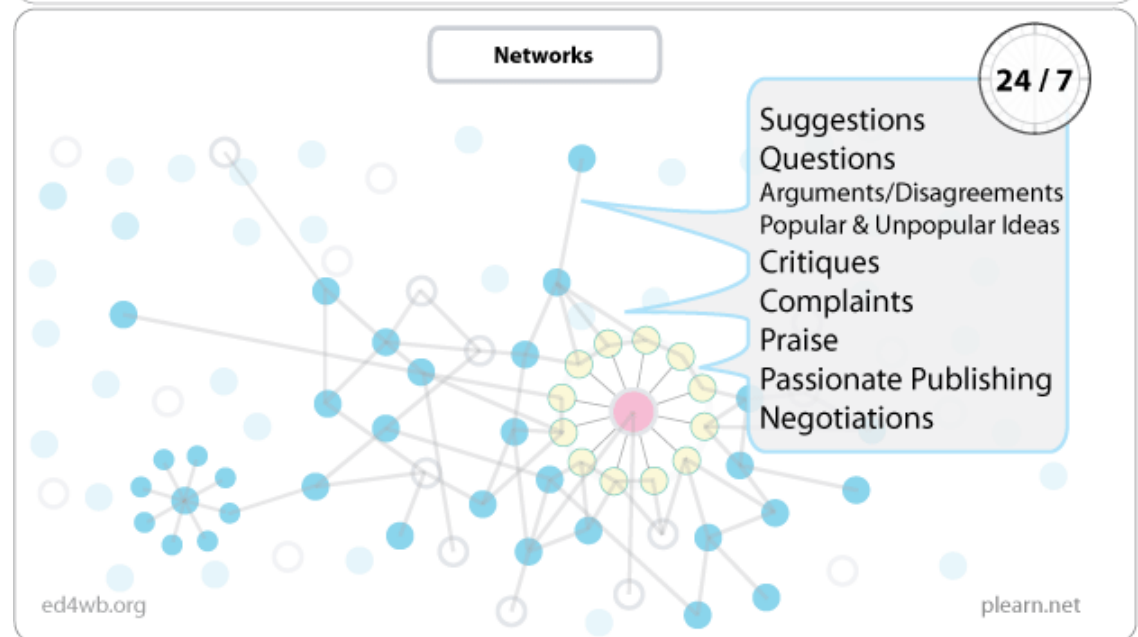
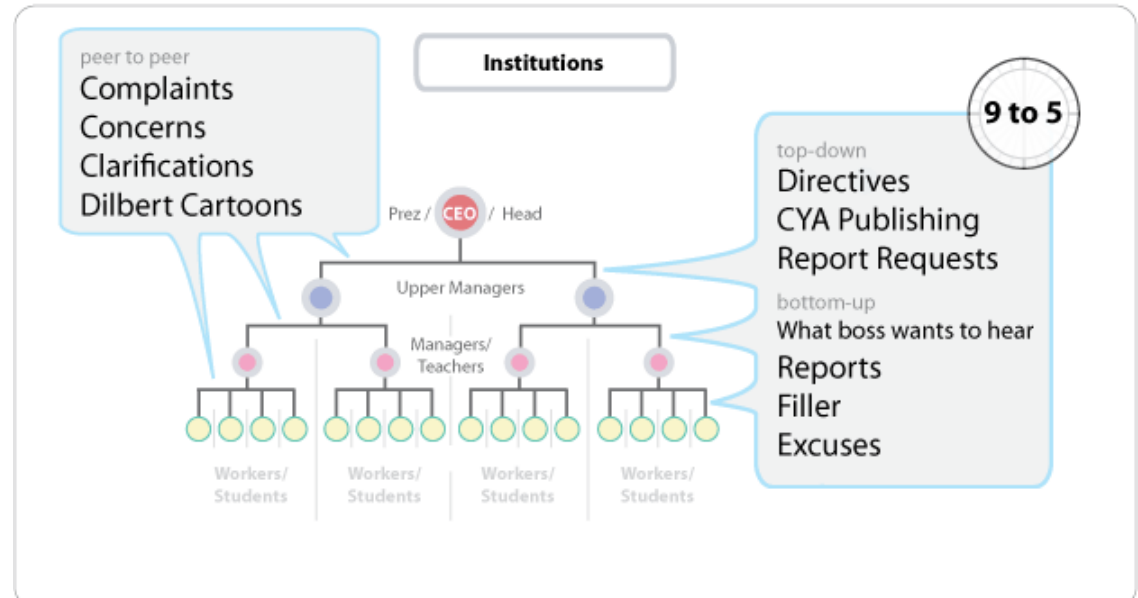


# Formal / Informal

- Formal: dedicated to obtaining or acquiring a base of knowledge
- Informal: dedicated to the completion of some task or activity

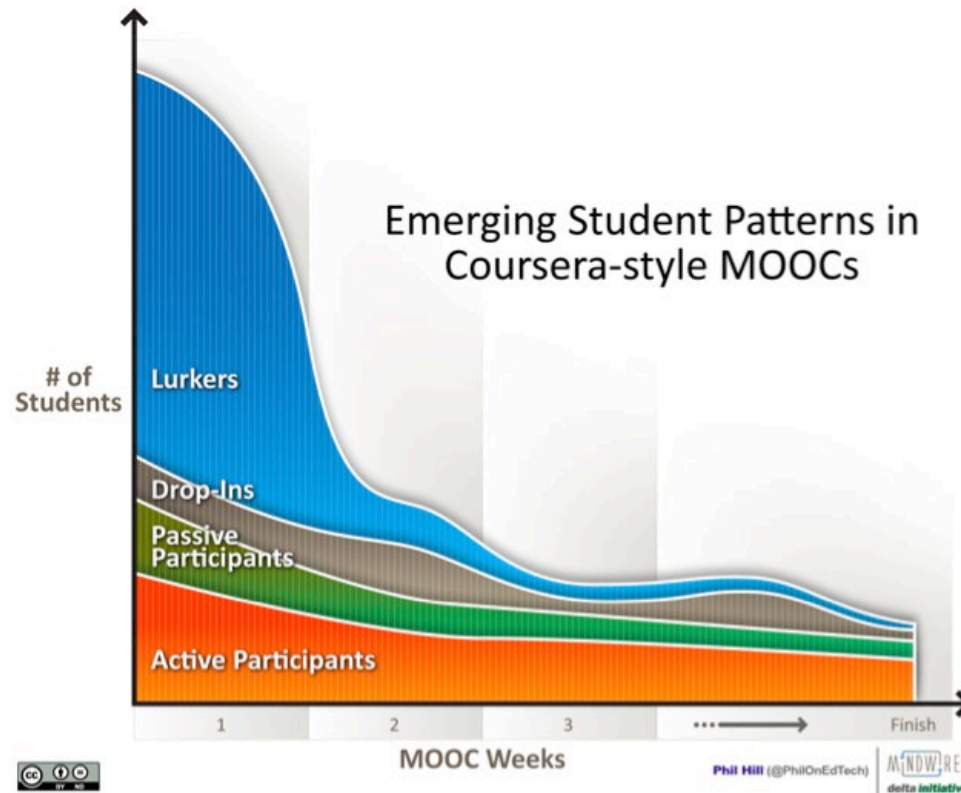


# What gets communicated





# Participation Rates



Phil Hill

[http://mfeldstein.com/emerging\\_student\\_patterns\\_in\\_moocs\\_graphical\\_view/](http://mfeldstein.com/emerging_student_patterns_in_moocs_graphical_view/)

# Courses vs....

Anderson: It may be best to conceptualize MOOCs as learning resources (much as a library) that learners can use in very many different ways, with equally diverse learning outcomes.



[http://terrya.edublogs.org/2013/06/24/moocs-and-distance-education-institutions/#\\_ENREF\\_12](http://terrya.edublogs.org/2013/06/24/moocs-and-distance-education-institutions/#_ENREF_12)

Videos



**September 11, 2012 12:42 p.m.**  
**Faking It: How the Media Manipulates the World into War**  
 GlobalResearch-TV  
 As the US and Iranian governments escalate tensions in the already volatile Straits of Hormuz, and China and Russia begin openly questioning Washington's interference in their internal politics, the world remains on a knife-edge of military tension. Far from being a dispassionate observer of these developments, however, the media has in fact been central to increasing those tensions and preparing the public to expect a military confrontation. But as the online media rises to displace the tra... []



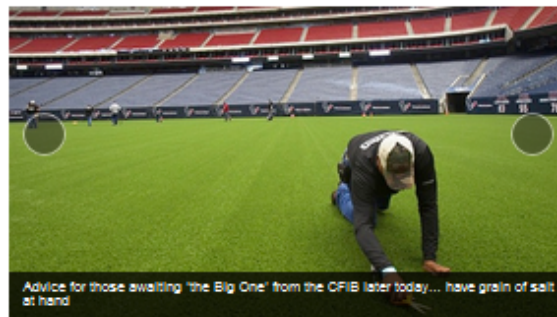
**September 10, 2012 11:48 p.m.**  
**Des balises pour les accommodements religieux**  
 DENIS L. DUBOIS  
 La Charte des valeurs québécoises mettrait en place des balises pour encadrer les accommodements religieux. Ce cadre, nos balises feraient en sorte que lorsqu'un accommodement est donné, il respecte nos valeurs communes. Pour en savoir plus, visitez [novolettres.gouv.qc.ca](http://novolettres.gouv.qc.ca) []



**September 10, 2012 4:14 p.m.**  
**Moncton 2013**  
 One day edit shot in the beautiful city of Moncton and Dieppe located in New-Brunswick! Riders featured in this edit: Matt Miller, Travis Brewer, Sebastien Leflanc. Song: Avicii - Silhouettes []



**September 9, 2012 11:53 p.m.**  
**NWO: DOMINO EFFECT**  
 MARK HOWITT  
 Mark Howitt is an independent researcher known for his work as a documentary film maker, musician and record label operator, and is also the founder of the World Public Union. He has appeared on many alternative media outlets such as Press For Truth, The Power Hour and other



Advice for those awaiting 'the Big One' from the CFIB later today... have grain of salt at hand

City

**September 12, 2012 2:02 a.m.**  
**RCMP searching for dangerous Nova Scotia fugitives, Moncton, N.B.**

(Royal Canadian Mounted Police in New Brunswick) Colliac Regional RCMP and the Southeast District RCMP are searching for 2 dangerous men wanted for incidents in Nova Scotia. Colliac Regional RCMP believe that those two men are currently in the Southeast part of New Brunswick. []



**September 11, 2012 10:54 p.m.**  
**Le nord du Nouveau-Brunswick un enjeu pour l'Acadie**

(Radio-Canada | Acadie) Donald Sevrin, professeur à l'Université de Moncton, manifeste une fois de plus de l'inquiétude pour l'avenir de l'Acadie si on ne trouve pas un moyen de relancer l'économie du nord du Nouveau-Brunswick. []

**September 11, 2012 9:19 p.m.**  
**Debate brewing over English-only menus at Moncton coffee shop**

(CTV News Atlantic - Public RSS) A new Starbucks on Moncton's Main Street is ruffling a few feathers with its English-only signage and menus. []

**September 11, 2012 2:41 p.m.**  
**Les Jeux olympiques de 2016 dans la mire d**

(Université de Moncton Flux RSS) []

**September 11, 2012 2:55 p.m.**  
**RCMP warn the public of fraudulent cheque scam, Moncton, N.B.**

(Royal Canadian Mounted Police in New Brunswick) The RCMP New Brunswick Federal Operations East is warning people to be aware of a fraudulent cheque scam that might have victims in New Brunswick. []

**September 11, 2012 2:45 p.m.**  
**Sept. 11 1/2: This is simply a footnote to the blog for Sept. 1 - but quite a footnote.**

[noreply@lucan.com](mailto:noreply@lucan.com) (Globe and Mail) The Canadian Transport Safety Board has announced

Search bar with magnifying glass icon.

Select Language

Translate:

Follow

Facebook



Twitter

Follow @FreeMoncton 54 followers

Subscribe

- RSS Local News Feed
- Daily Email Newsletter

Contribute

- Click here to submit a letter to the editor.
- Click here to submit an article.
- Click here to submit an event.



Events

Got an event? Post it here on Moncton Free Press. Click here.

September 12



**Rodney Carrington**  
 Casino NB, 21 Casino Dr., Moncton, NB (Map)  
**20:00** Rodney Carrington is a multitalented comedian, actor, and writer who has recorded eight major record

label comedy albums selling over 3 million copies. Morning Wood has been certified gold and Greatest Hits has been certified Platinum by the RIAA. Rodney starred in his own TV sitcom Rodney, which ran for two seasons on ABC. He co-wrote and co-starred with Toby Keith in the feature film Bear for My Horses. [ [Anti in Calendar](#) ]

# Browsing

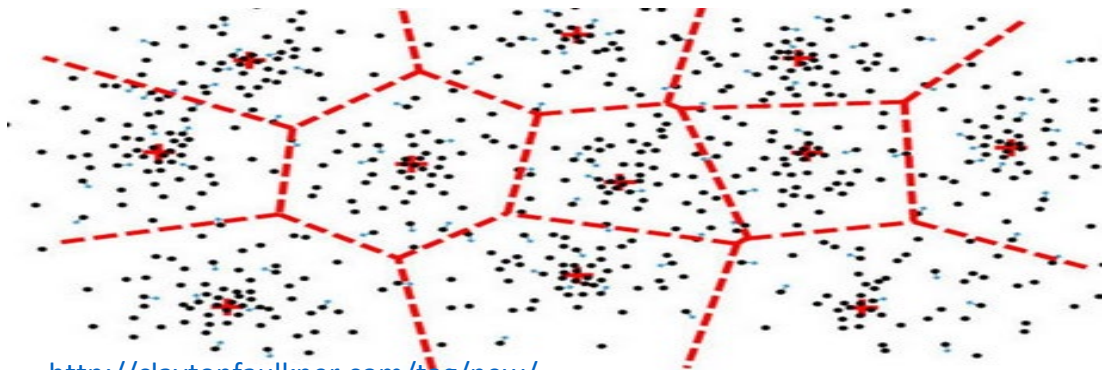
- Compare a MOOC with a newspaper – or with a ...?
- Self-organization = exactly the mechanism by which individuals make decisions, iterated



# Emergence

Roy Williams and Jenny Mackness

- we're looking at emergence....
- self-organizing = independent, adaptive, unpredictable
- when you start self-organizing your learning, emergence and emergent learning will occur



# Describing Emergence

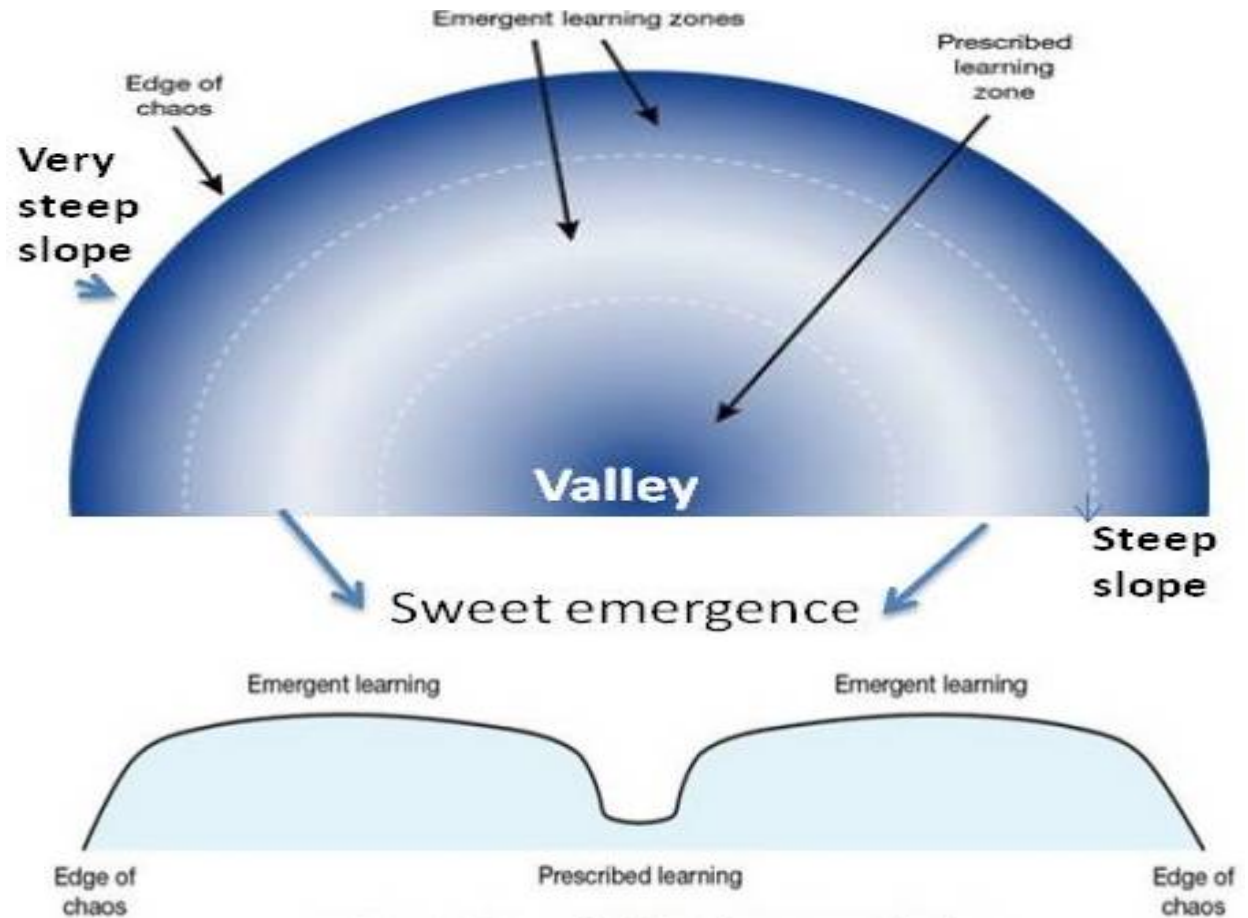
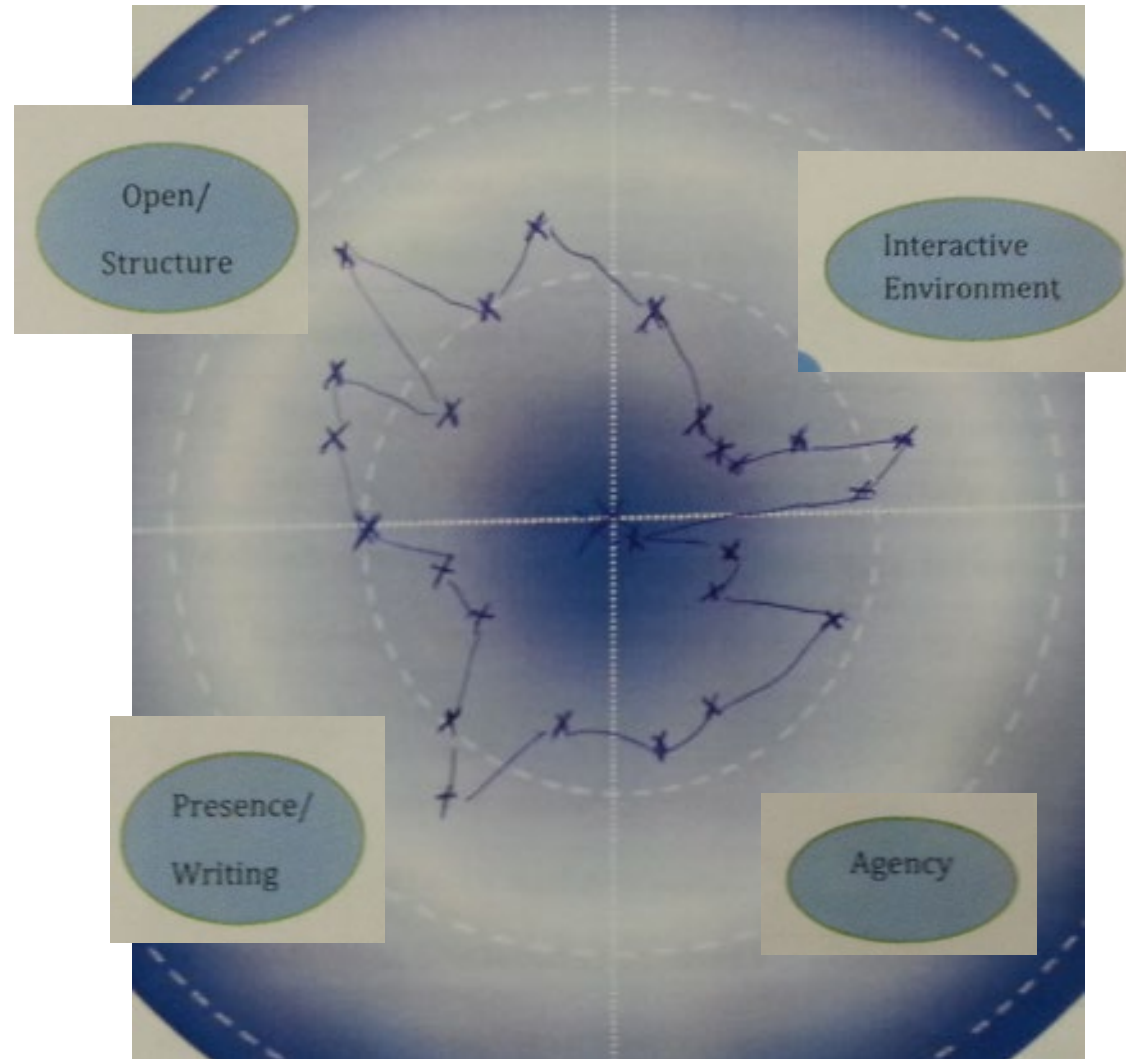


Figure 4. Topographical footprint – cross section view.

# Alt-C Style



# Order and Chaos

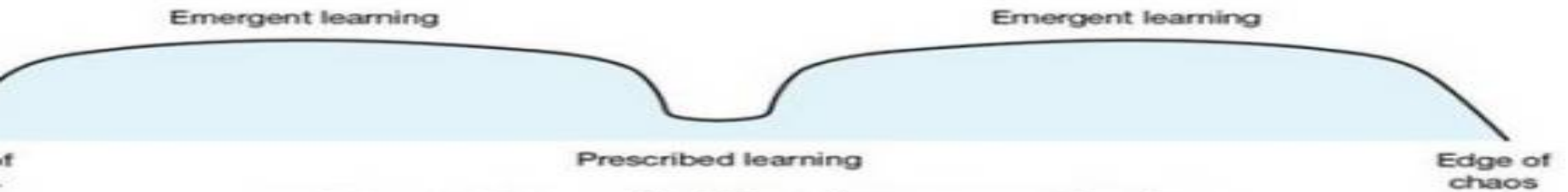
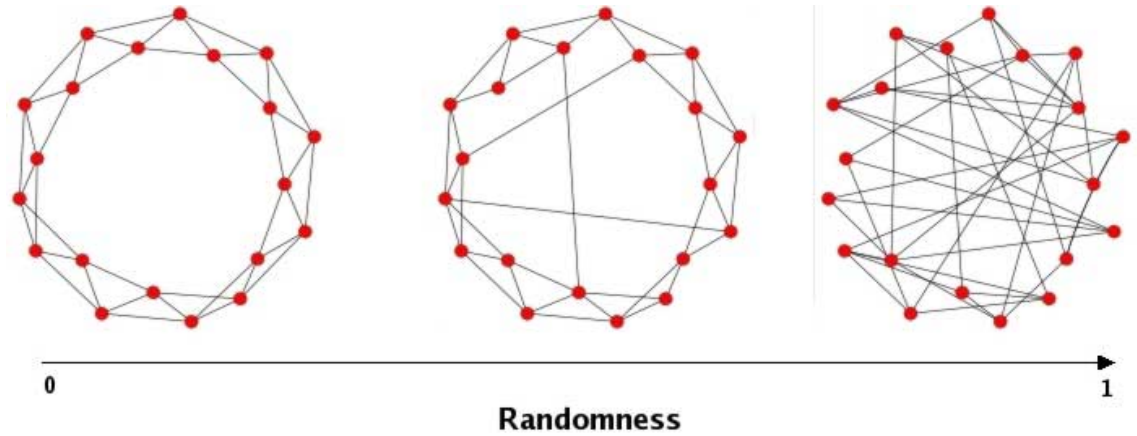
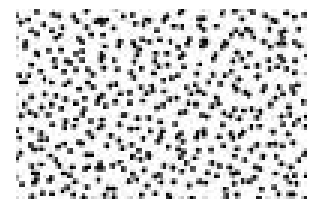
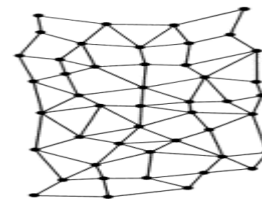
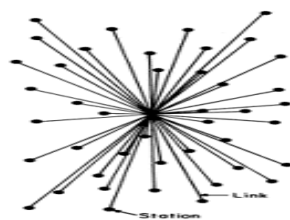


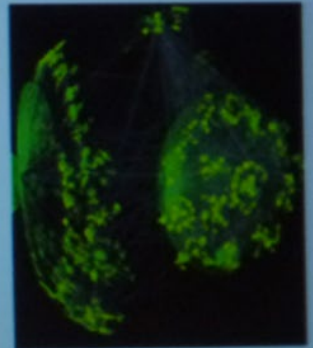
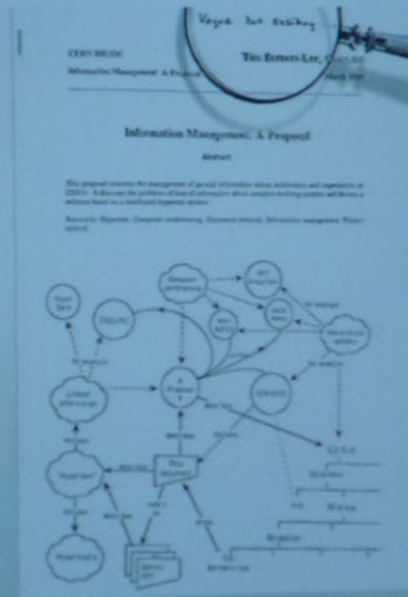
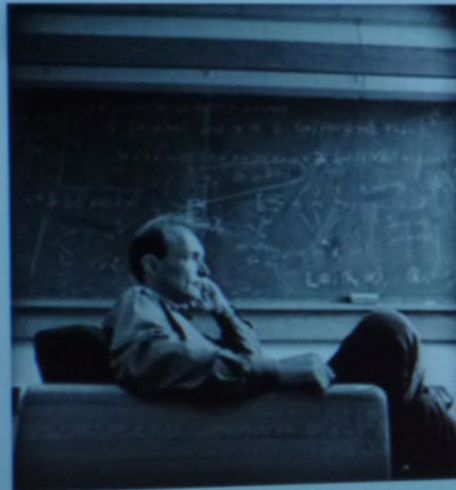
Figure 4. Topographical footprint – cross section view.





# Wendy Hall

The Web – most successful information architecture in history



# Why the Web Won

- big is beautiful – one network prevails – think Facebook
- scruffy works: let the links fail to make it scale
- democracy rules: open, free and universal
- but we lost (for a time) conceptual and contextual - the semantic web



# Decentralization

Why do MOOC forums fail?



*"Ironically, the biggest obstacle preventing MOOC students from forming relationships is the feature most relied on to encourage them."*

<http://acreelman.blogspot.co.uk/2013/09/the-silent-majority-why-are-mooc-forums.html>

<http://campustechnology.com/Articles/2013/09/03/Building-a-Sense-of-Community-in-MOOCs.aspx>

# Decentralization

"online learning is bad because I can't ask questions when I get stuck" (Rob Farmer & Kate Littlemore)



# Experiences...

- delivery: daily maintenance, intro week (which was the busiest), after that it was largely self-running (Angie Clonan & Luke Miller)
- the style we adopt as tutors/facilitators shapes the length and tone of students postings (so be careful how you model things) (Helen Whitehead)

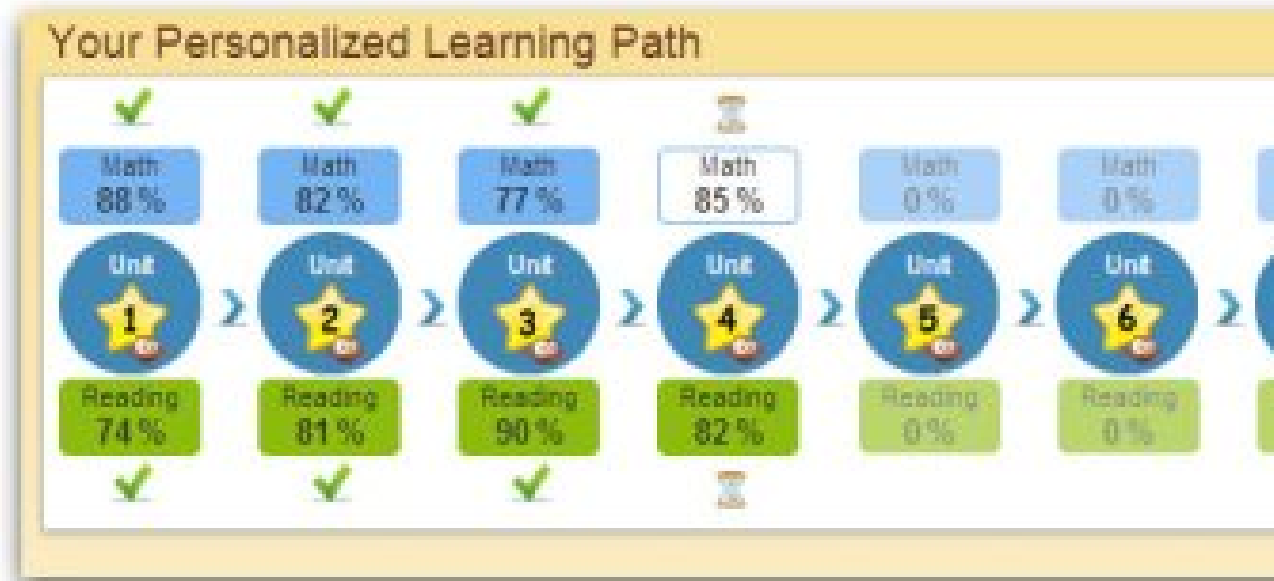
# More Experiences...

- the reaction of business people to student interviewers was very different than to staff (Roger Henry)
- change in value proposition - questioning the value of higher ed, driven by enormous costs to attend (Larry Reagan) – analogous to buying a large house in case you are going to have a family

# New Models, New Approaches



# Personalized...



- Adaptive path
- Custom selection, etc etc



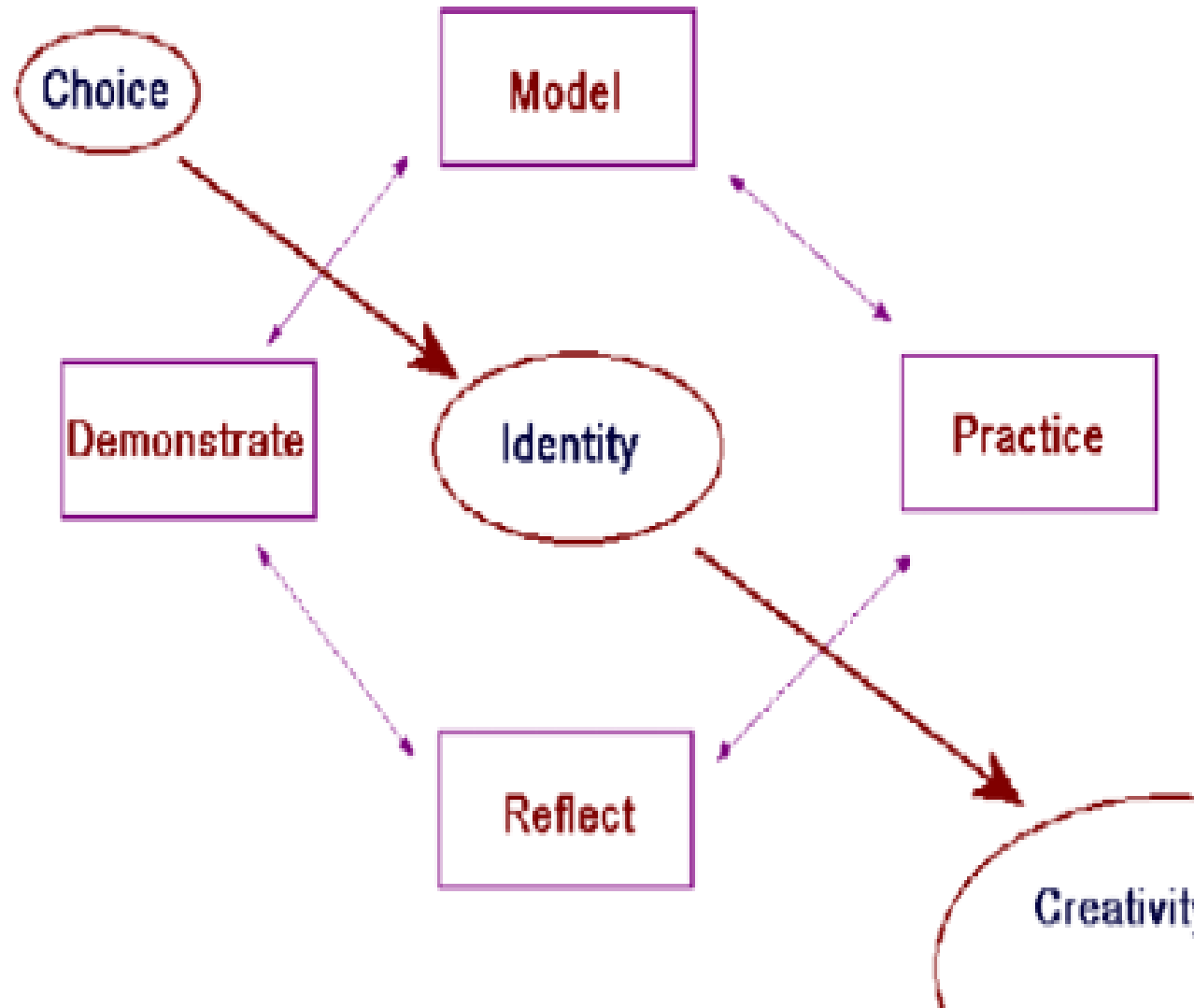
# Personal...

To *teach* is to *model* and to *demonstrate*  
To *learn* is to *practice* and *reflect*



Sharing experience vs describing and telling...

# Learning Environment



# Evaluating Outcomes

What is success in a MOOC –  
can only be observed from  
*outside* the MOOC

- model of emergent knowledge that develops inside the MOOC
- did it take shape, replicate or influence the world outside (was the MOOC an agent of *change*?)

# Being Open

**Brian Lamb:** We share a dedication to working in ways that exploit network effects to inform, amplify and augment our practice. We share what we do because it feels good, because it makes what we do better, because it represents a human-scale way of being, one with global reach.

<http://abject.ca/open-for-business/>

# What Difference Will MOOCs Make?



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaOC9danxNo>

[https://twitter.com/Cmdr\\_Hadfield](https://twitter.com/Cmdr_Hadfield)

# What Are Cultures of Learning?



What we do, what we model,  
what we share, what we create...



Stephen Downes

<http://www.downes.ca>