

**Creating a
Community Open
Online Courses
(COOCs) model to
explore the
implications for
Popular Education
approaches in
online space**

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Background

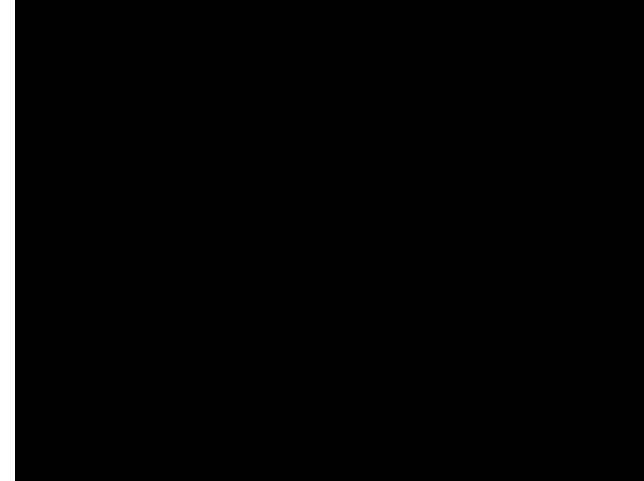
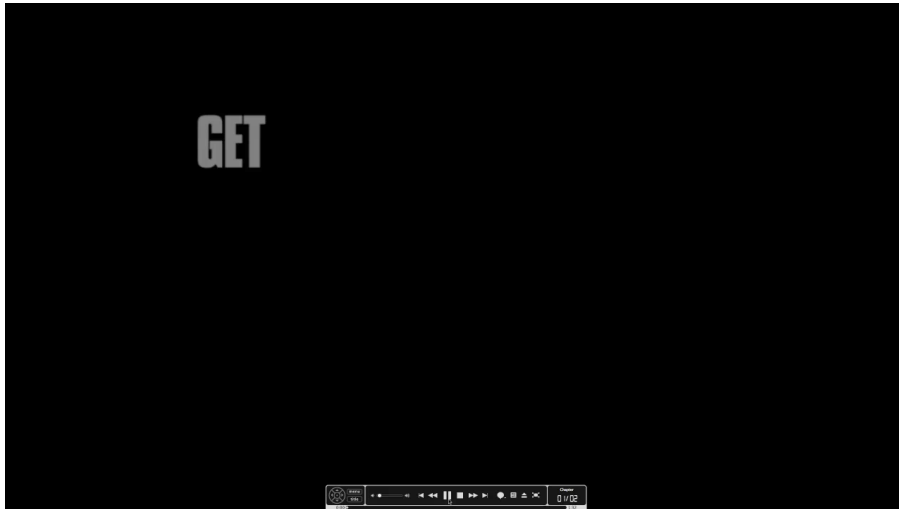
Literature

Methodology

Findings emerging



From Light bulbs to Exploding Feathers



[Press here if things go wrong](#)

Community Open Online

Courses:

- emerged from ideas working with adult literacy students
- 'followed' me to Higher Ed and got some LSIS funding (which then *dissolved* – LSIS, not the funding!)
- website that allows for sharing of courses - I wanted a community self-build but had to use 'preferred commercial provider'

The Big Idea was/is:

- Popular Education ethos in online space
- Everyone can teach/ everyone can learn/ knowledge generated by the community itself – roles self-selected & community generated from there
- Non-institutional affiliation
- Blending of virtual and real-world experiences/ learning – not just online.
- Involved production over passive consumption
- Avoid passivity of '*hidden curriculum*' – generate active research of '*hidden knowledge*'





What Are COOCS?

Community Open Online Courses (COOCS) are an opportunity for people to share their passions, ideas and knowledge with each other. What learning is created is down to you, the users. Learning is most enjoyable when it's taught by those with enthusiasm and a desire to share what they know. The word 'courses' is loosely used, there are no exams, no tests, no qualifications required. The aim is to get people from all parts of the community to generate learning opportunities and to share their knowledge.

How the learning/ teaching looks, what it involves and what it includes is up to you. People learn in many ways and we hope you can bring creativity, enthusiasm and positivity as we start to create courses across many areas of interest.

- Easy** – Anyone Can Do It
- Medium** – A Little Background Knowledge Will Help
- Hard** – Not For Newbies
- Mega** – You're Going To Have To Know Your Stuff!

Featured Courses [VIEW ALL COURSES](#)



AWAITING IMAGE

1 course
Short intro



Wibble course

1 course
Short intro



education studies for poetic visionaries and dreamers

a little video of beauty to entrance you

Choose your ideal COOC today, and bring learning home [VIEW ALL SUBJECTS](#) [VIEW ALL COURSES](#)

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We are delighted to announce our new logo to the world.....
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Tutors

Lecturer in English Language, interested in cognition, ideology and philosophy of language. Also like cake and dodgy French novels.
- Terry McDonough

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<http://www.cooocs.co.uk>

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Research Questions

‘To what extent are notions of emancipation and empowerment evident in the participants’ uses and experiences of COOCs?’

What **range of courses emerge** during the development of the COOCs project?

What **reasons do participants give** for their involvement with COOCs as either tutor/learner?

How do participants experience COOCs in relation to issues of technology, expertise and accessibility?

In what ways do participants apply teaching and learning practices in roles of both teacher and learner?

How do participants describe their experiences on the COOCs project with reference to positive and negative elements from their own involvement?

Popular Education



It is the aim of education to take part in the correcting of unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetuate them...it is must take account of the needs of existing community life. It must select with the intention of improving life we live in common' (Adams & Horton, 1975, p. 13).

Key Thinkers:

Myles Horton

Paulo Freire

Key Ideas:

Participation and creation

Social context at centre of education

Resistance to unfair/ unequal divisions

Teacher and Learner in non-hierarchical relationship

Knowledge generated by a community, not imposed by abstract and distant 'expert discourse'

WEA



Learning for Life

Trade Unions

Ragged Schools

Music Societies

W.M.C.

Philosophy groups





Theory And Practice



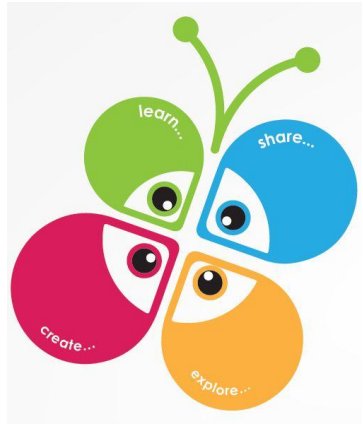
"If we don't want the information age to deliver widespread economic and political destruction, we must commit to including all citizens in a dialog about creating a just and equitable future. In the end, our liberation is bound up in each other; we all sink or swim together."

DIGITAL DEAD END by Virginia Subanok

Fighting for Social Justice in the Information Age



COOCS
community open online courses



Pedagogy & theories of learning/ teaching

Popular Education
Popular Technology
Community and Critical Pedagogy
Rhizomatic Learning
'Bewildering Education'

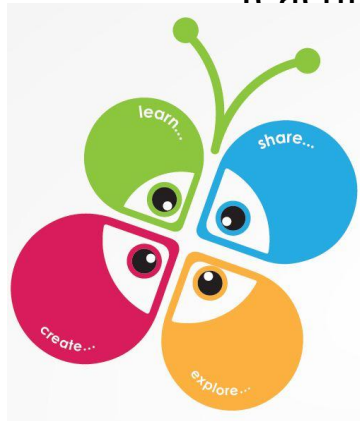
Humanisation and dehumanisation



Technological determinism

Grint & Woolgar
Brecht, McLuhan, Mumford, Mozorov
ELearning Singularity paradigm – Gale
Parchoma
Bourdieu – autodidact (from *Distinction*)

Teaching as Design



Corporate, Cultural and Social – resistance and empowerment in timeless time

Industrial Revolution
Deleuze and Societies of Control
Edupunk/ Ragged University/ Anarchogogy
Sugata Mitra and S.O.L.E.

*The Development of Education in
Accrington 1790 - 1903*

'All but the basic necessities of life were denied the majority of the population. The beautiful new factories and machines were the obverse of the miserable dwellings and subhuman existence of the hands'

Edgar Stone (1957)

Bertolt Brecht 'Radio Theory' 1927

'If I believed our present bourgeoisie were going to live another 100 years then I would be certain it would continue to babble on for hundreds of years about the "tremendous possibilities" that the radio contains... A man who has something to say and has no listeners is bad off. Even worse off are listeners who can't find something to say to them'

From 'The Myths of Information: Technology and Post Industrial Culture' 1980 – Edited by Kathleen Woodward

Lewis Mumford, The Pentagon of Power, 1970

'...even if books are not abandoned but continue their present rate of production, the multiplication of microfilms actually magnifies the central problem – that of coping with quantity – and postpones the real solution...namely the reassertion of human selectivity and moral self-discipline leading to continent productivity. Without such self-imposed restraints the overproduction..will bring about state of intellectual enervation and depletion hardly to be distinguished from massive ignorance'

From 'The Myths of Information: Technology and Post Industrial Culture' 1980 – Edited by Kathleen Woodward

‘While each communication technology does have its own individual properties...the economic and political system in which the device is embedded always trumps technological possibilities and imperatives’

Mozorov, E. (2011). *The Net Delusion*.

Radical, Community Education offers, *...alternatives in philosophy, pedagogy and institutional arrangements and...at root not a desire to be critical but indeed to create a whole alternative social order'* (p.6)

Lovett, Tom (1988)

'Educating Yourself and others, especially in a knowledge of your circumstances, was a step in changing the world...knowledge as an natural right, an unconditional good' (p.5)

A focus on education as **Participation not Representation**

Lovett's Community ethos

'...a basically **optimistic view of human nature**, one which stresses **cooperation, fraternity, egalitarianism**. It is basically a call for people, oppressed people, **to have more control over their own lives, to shape their world and to use modern resources and technology to do so...**

...it presupposes that it is possible, in modern circumstances, using modern tools and resources, to find a way whereby men and women can become more fully integrated into their social environment and find in it something deeply expressive of their own personality and aspirations' (p.143)

Tom Lovett (1988)

Popular technology focuses on developing for a world in which all people can become more critical technological citizens, rather than teaching people technical skills or providing poor communities with technological resources.

Popular technology is not about teaching technology *per se*;
it is a popular educational approach to researching the complex inequalities of the information economy.

(Eubanks, 2007, p.131)



Technology is not necessarily a means of liberation from oppression and can equally be seen as the means of oppression and limited opportunity.

Digital Divide in Eubank's study reveals minimum wage workers in high tech industries – access and skills exist, but opportunities do not.

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Lovett, Tom (1988)

Social & Cultural Capital

Bourdieu's description of the autodidact:

'Because he has not acquired his culture in the legitimate order established by the educational system, the autodidact constantly betrays, by his very anxiety about the right classification, the arbitrariness of his classifications and therefore of his knowledge – a collection of unstrung pearls accumulated in the course of an uncharted exploration, unchecked by the institutionalised, standardised stages and obstacles, the curricula and progressions which make scholastic culture a ranked and ranking set of interdependent levels and forms of knowledge'

Bourdieu, P. (1984, 2010ed). *Distinction*. Abingdon: Routledge. Education and the Autodidact.

Rhizomatic Learning

Deleuze & Guattari's concept – multiplicity over singularity/ rejection of tree metaphors and seeking tap roots, creating hierarchies – shift from the institutions as owners and creators of knowledge and meaning

Often romanticised, unproblematic reading of world for on line learning – suggest a recognition of the disruptive potential of D & G

Open to knowledge creation from multiple sources – disrupts expert discourse

Human *becomings*, rather than human *beings*

Minority and majority – the dehumanisation of the 'many' as the minority.

The raising of the few as 'the majority'

Social as 'machine', assemblages – territorialisation/ deterritorialisation/ reterritorialisation

Lines of flight



Popular Education

(again, because I think we need to regroup here!)

‘ Popular Education sprang from many of the same roots as critical pedagogy but historically occupied a position closer to communities affected by oppression and maintained a stricter focus on practice...

[popular education] has the potential to resolve many of the enduring dilemmas of political pedagogy’

(Wiggins, N. 2011, Critical pedagogy and Popular Education: Towards a Unity of Theory & Practice)

+

‘The disciplinary man was a discontinuous producer of energy, but the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network. Everywhere ‘surfing’ has already replaced the older sports’ (p.6)

‘One of the most important questions will concern the ineptitude of the unions: tied to whole history of their struggle against the disciplines or within the spaces of enclosure, will they be able to adapt themselves or will they give way to new forms of resistance against the societies of control?’ (p.7)

Deleuze, G. ‘PostScript on the Societies of Control’ 1992

=

New forms of ‘Popular’, new concept of
‘Education’

Methodology

Participatory Action Research – ‘*with* not *on* people’

Deleuze *empiricism* – looking to experiences through the use of COOCs as shaping the views of the participants/ researcher on what occurs

Ontology of Hope – Paulo Freire – considering a world view that is shaped by awareness of need for change, not directed entirely by external/ prevailing world views

- Ethno-methodology, narrative through online texts/ interviews

-12 respondents in first stage

200 users registered

16 courses published

35 courses unpublished

Open Survey sent to all 200 users and newsletter subscribers

The research so far:

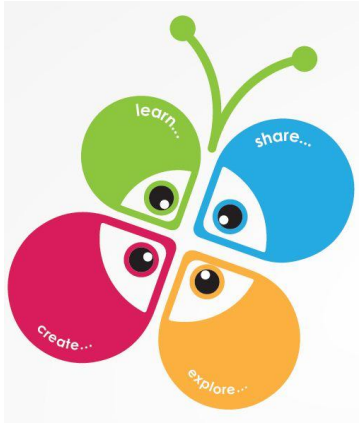
Issues faced

Types of courses created

Responses from users

Themes

Crossing thresholds



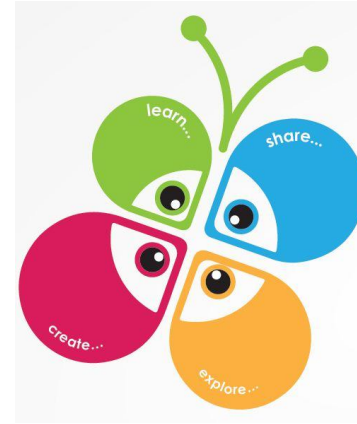
Terminology
Language & meaning
Friendly or academic?

Resources



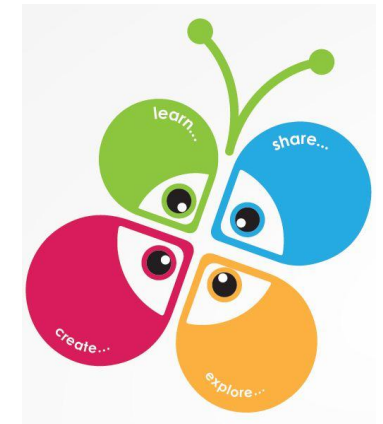
Technology (central)
Technology (person)
Commercial vs Community

Course Creation



- Predominantly Art & Humanities
- Mixture of personal/ professional - a personal 'take' on professional content

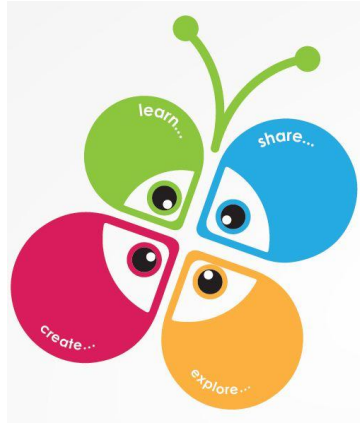
Institutional as confining



'Zen'– 'Its about doing what I thought teaching was, right back when I started, beyond the functional and within the spirit, the Zen of teaching maybe? '

Themes

Demographic*

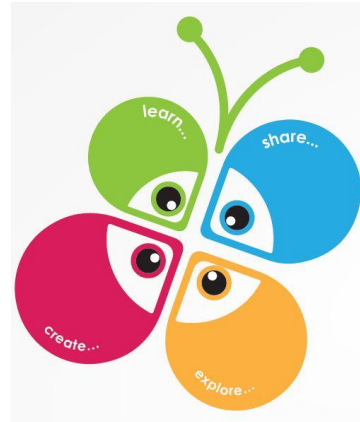


56% have been/ are teachers**

72% of users are female*

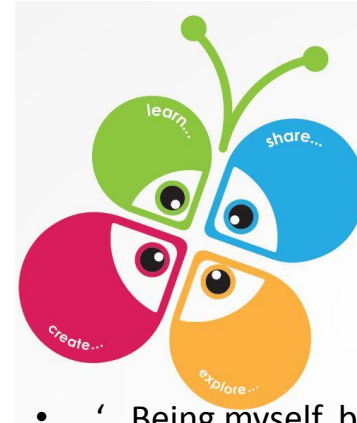
40% have taken online course/ MOOC previously**

Play



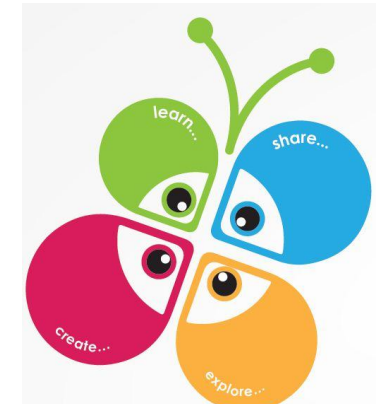
'...the chance to play, and share that play, is important, outside a role of having to be 'sure' something 'works' and in a place where we can be open to failing or making a mess'

Ego and identity



- '...Being myself, but not the professional self, just me'
- '...engaging beyond the walls, I don't say what I do, I just show the work and hope that encourages discussion'
- 'I wanted the second life avatar to take this course, no confusion between me and the avatar – it feels more free'

Depth of content



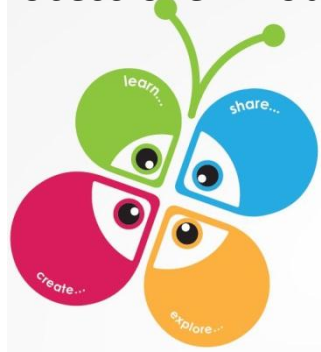
"It [course on philosophy] is more, not less, concerned with the themes of philosophy as I see it...not being fixed by the curriculum I open with Diogenes, because he is more interesting, more crucial to where we are now – in course material, of course, it's Plato, it's Socrates, but here, I choose, my direction, my course"

'Slow Learning, not the flow of the semester, but as we come to it, as it emerges'

* Of 196 registered users **of 48 responses to survey

Themes

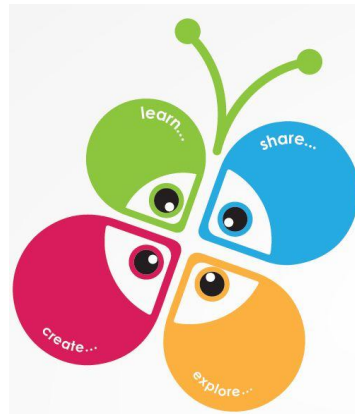
Process over Product



'Art is not about the artefact, it shouldn't be, its about how we get there, the thoughts and ideas, the creative process, the evaluation and the assimilation of the world around us. Becoming an artist rather than being an accredited artist.'

'I get that its about doing stuff, not just for a certificate. That's important, knowing you can do something and not just being on a course that says you can – certificates can be good too though'

Revision of roles



'For me it's kind of opened up a lot more in the sense that actually going through that process, challenging myself as to think about what a COOC is, has kind of helped me to really kind of assess what I think, you know...teaching and learning is, in a way' (Teacher – Art COOC)

'...teaching is serious, if you say that you are teaching something, I will do it, yes, but not just like that, I need to know, it has to be good, I need to know it for certain, then I can teach it, but not until I know it' (author of unpublished COOC – non-teacher background)

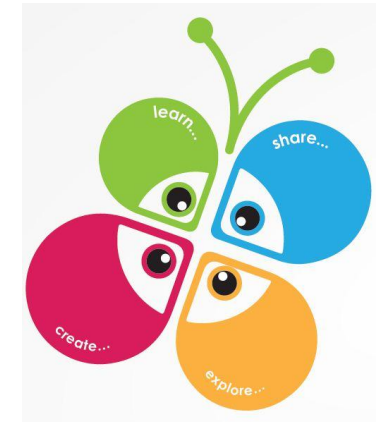
Time



'Time, it's got to be available to me when I'm free, I mean, I will do it, but it's all time, and this is not, well, not that important compared to work...they pay me, and watch that I do it, it has to be done. Nobody would watch me for this, would they?'

'giving time is important, creating something that is worth sharing, it takes the time in creation, from the concept, the idea, to the materials, to the stuff people see'

Accountability




'I would do it, but who would want to learn from me? You need to trust that they know, not just because I say you should, but trust, really trust that they know' (Signed up as student/ Teacher, no courses created)

I want to get involved from an organisational point of view, it would help us share the resources, but how long will you be around? These things, they come and go so quickly, you put time and effort in and then whoosh, it's gone' (Homeless charity volunteer)



 **How free are our choices for online learning?**
How free are our choices using the internet?



 **Study of the creative process: Making the process visible**
'The Book of Knowledge' volume COU - GEN the starting point...




 **The Studio**
Do art like you used to - because you can.



 **LIVING WITH MADNESS AND HEARING VOICES**
Learning the journey back to living your life



 **Education in the Digital Age**
Education in a Digital Age




 **A Guerrilla's Guide to Continental Philosophy**
An incredibly short introduction to the key ideas in the history of continental philosophy



 **Teaching in Turkey**
Learn useful tips and some background into teaching in Turkey



 **The History of the Present: Michel Foucault and Educational Policy and Change**
An introduction to educational policy and change processes through Michel Foucault's theoretical lens

*Food Budgeting with Food Bank volunteers; Dealing with Eviction with Shelter; Economic Factors for Food Scarcity with Ragged University; **STOP PRESS** – The COOCs on eviction has altered the Shelter guidance to reflect change in the law (November 2013) that changes what landlords need to include in eviction notices.*

Next steps...

Forging relationship with Ragged University

Shifting to MOODLE, rejecting the commercial site

Create a more defined user group in online and f2f spaces