Chapter 4
MOOCs and the Art Studio: A Catalyst for Innovation and Change in eLearning Development and Studio Pedagogies

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ABSTRACT
The challenges of MOOCs are currently a significant issue for universities. New contexts of openness, massiveness and collaboration on the Web are challenging traditional forms of university education delivery. These challenges are catalysts for change both generally and in studio pedagogies in particular. This chapter focuses on how disruption caused to traditional art studio teaching models occur through intersection with MOOC activity. The provision of studio arts subjects by MOOC providers is also shown to be innovative for MOOC design and delivery. The authors show these challenges by drawing on their participation in two arts-based MOOCs, The Art of Photography and Practice Based Research in the Arts. The MOOC pedagogies of openness, massiveness and collaboration, provide opportunities inherent in studio-based arts delivery which contemporary MOOC platforms rarely achieve. The authors draw into question potential frameworks for evaluating choosing and designing contemporary MOOC activity. This chapter falls within the ‘policy issues in MOOCs design’ with specific relevance for the topic of ‘technology and change management for the MOOCs environment’.

INTRODUCTION
The success of MOOC developments has challenged university education business and delivery models (Daniels, 2012; Yuan & Powell, 2013; Maslen, 2012). Prospective students can via MOOCs take free lectures and sample a wide range of potential courses and subject areas. Commentators (Fairey 2012; McKenna 2012) have predicted a tsunami effect on higher education generally. This disruption could be a catalyst for transformation by MOOC activities for all
subjects and studio arts pedagogies in particular (Shao, Daley & Vaughan, 2007; Zehner et al., 2010; Cohen, 2013). With new platforms such as edX designed to specifically target arts based courses (Empson, 2013) we explore these shifts by examining two MOOCs that are explicitly working in studio pedagogical areas of photography and arts based research methodologies. We examine these learning spaces with the understanding that both studio pedagogies and MOOCs benefit from the interaction of each of their learning approaches. Daniel (2012) highlighted that universities, with scarcity at the heart of their business models, will have to “...do more than pay lip service to the importance of teaching and put it at the core of their missions.” In order to make this adaption universities will need, in particular, a shift to “…embracing openness” (Daniels, 2012).

Currently, there are significant issues in the university studio, where studio models are under pressure because of costs, creating the need to find innovative, inventive and efficient ways of meeting the demands of studio teaching and learning (ACUADS, 2013). Studio art courses are an obvious target as they are under pressure to pedagogically change the ways that they operate within the Australian university context (Zehner et al., 2010). Using established frameworks for evaluating MOOCs (Conole, 2013; Downes, 2014) we extract elements that are of common interest and of most relevance for the MOOCs in which we participated, openness, massiveness and collaboration, to elaborate on our reflective experiences in the two MOOCs. We discuss these elements with the pedagogical concepts of virtual studios and guided serendipity. Our analysis is based on a narrative inquiry methodology, and reflects upon our learning experiences as researchers, providing insight into the experience of a MOOC in a contextually complex situation.

BACKGROUND CONTEXTS

cMOOCs

MOOCs were initially envisaged as a collaborative and distributed learning activity (Burnham-Fink, 2013). MOOCs took advantage of an opportunity in the ways the Internet could operate as an aggregator and disseminator within and between learning communities. This capability, commonly known as Web2.0, enabled educators to pull content from student input, and repurpose these contributions without the need for central lecturer created content. This development was based on the theory of connectivism which was also the subject of the first MOOC in 2008 on Connectivism and Connective Knowledge (Downes, nd). It was from this first MOOC that the term MOOCs was coined (Daniel, 2012). Early MOOCs took advantage of student blogging and social media syndication and aggregation to gather and distribute knowledge for enriching the learning experience. The term cMOOC was later coined to represent connectivist MOOCs (Levy, 2014).

xMOOCs

During the intervening period, the more formal and corporate of MOOCs have become known as xMOOCs. Business models driven by the opportunities of scale created MOOCs emphasising massiveness where previously MOOCs had emphasised openness and collaboration (Levy, 2014). MOOC pedagogy has changed, becoming commonly understood as recorded video lectures and a ‘push’ approach to learning (Smith & Eng, 2013). This is vastly different proposition to the initial approach to massive online learning leading to a divide in cMOOC and xMOOCs.
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