Open media classes at Coventry University
Final evaluation report 2015

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Picture taken by Alan Levine
https://flic.kr/p/hm355K
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1. Introduction

This report offers a reflection on findings from a one year evaluation study into the distributed open media classes at Coventry University.

The study team comprised Lou McGill and Tim Gray of Lou McGill Consultancy Ltd\(^1\). This report is augmented by an open wiki (bit.ly/1KqL4nH) which includes more detail about the approaches used during the study and findings are also presented as a series of web pages (com.loumcgill.co.uk). We would like to thank the Department of Media in the School of Art and Design for their input, openness and patience during the study. In particular we would like to acknowledge the following individuals\(^2\): Shaun Hides, Jonathan Worth, Matt Johnston, Peter Woodbridge and Jonathan Shaw. We would also like to thank David Kernohan from Jisc who provided valuable support and information.

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2. Approach and stakeholders

The study adopted an iterative approach, working in partnership with the Coventry Team to consider past and current practice of key stakeholders in the open media classes. This approach utilised a framework (activity system triangle bit.ly/1dufMPb) to guide discussion around rules, roles, tools within the ‘system’ (in this case the various course stakeholders). For a fuller description of the method and approach see the Evaluation Approach (bit.ly/1CPRwfZ) wiki page, the Evaluation Activities (bit.ly/1LM4BiH) wiki page and the Evaluation Questions (bit.ly/1LHEngo) wiki page. Appendix 1 includes evaluation questions from the perspectives of different stakeholder groups.

The study recognised that the whole story of the open media classes is made up of a series of different narratives from a variety of stakeholders and that we needed to reflect their diverse needs and approaches (recognising that boundaries between learner/teacher/curator/creator are blurred within this model). Evaluating the Open Media Classes was challenging as there are several stakeholders involved in these models.

We identified the following groups of stakeholders which sometimes include sub groups. Some stakeholders may belong to several groups, particularly as one of the key factors of the open media classes is that boundaries are blurred and roles are not predefined or static.

- Academic team - impact on academic practice
- Support teams
- Registered students - impact on learning, employability, professional networking
- Open students
- Open professionals
- Institutional senior managers (department/faculty level, strategic level, operational level)
- Wider HE community (UK and global) Jisc, other HEIs

Stakeholders are viewed in this study as

1. different groups of people with an interest in the questions we need to ask (audience/community)
2. different groups of people who are experiencing the impact of open classes (subjects)
3. Background

3.1 Distributed Open courses

Networking technologies have the potential to transform learning and teaching from closed content-based approaches to open connected and collaborative experiences. Yet questions remain about how far open access to both content and learning opportunities translates into successful experiences for learners (Littlejohn et al. 2014). Educational institutions, which tend to be slow to change, can struggle to adapt existing models of teaching and support to take account of these changes, but have to respond to growing competition in a global context and a range of different emerging open models (Weller, 2014). Coventry University was an early adopter of open approaches and the Department of Media at the School of Art and design secured funding from the third phase of the HEFCE funded UK Open Educational Resources Programme (UKOER) (2011-2012). Whilst many of the projects in the UKOER Programme (2009-2012) were focused specifically on content most of them were also concerned with open educational practices (OEP). The UKOER Coventry Open Media Classes (COMC) project was unusual in that it focused on open classes rather than content and their findings provided a rich additional story to the UKOER findings.

There are a range of different types of open course - from fully open massive courses such as the cMOOCs (based on connectivist principles of knowledge creation encouraging collaborative content creation, creativity, autonomy, and social networked learning) and xMOOCs (large scale high profile courses delivered largely through traditional means with a focus on didactic pedagogy such as lectures and testing) to what have been described as open boundary or open classroom courses (where existing traditional courses are opened up and transformed by contributions from open non fee-paying students and professionals around the world). Open classroom courses offer opportunities to integrate new open approaches with existing traditional models and the Coventry open media classes are one of the most successful exemplars of this model, providing tangible evidence of transformative teaching practice and enhanced student experiences. In these open classrooms roles of, and relationships between, the various stakeholders are changing in exciting and challenging ways. This study aims to tell the story of the Coventry open media classes and answer some of the questions that we need to consider around how far the models are transferable to other institutions and other subject disciplines, and how they have developed and adapted over the last 5 years.

An interesting recent development is the Connected Courses (connectedcourses.net) collaborative network of faculty in higher education. This initiative launched in summer 2014 establishing an open course for developing and teaching open courses in September 2014. The team at Coventry are contributing to Connected Courses and utilising this initiative to share their stories and their models with the wider community. This followed the Reclaim Open Learning (open.media.mit.edu) initiative from the DML Hub (dmlhub.net) (Digital Media and Learning), part of the MacArthur Foundation which had awarded a prize to support Coventry’s PhonarEd initiative (open.media.mit.edu/phonar-ed), University of Mary Washington’s DS106 (open.media.mit.edu/ds106) (Digital Storytelling) course, and FemTechNet’ distributed course (open.media.mit.edu/femtechnet).

PhonarEd provides ‘a back channel for instructors to come together, share experiences and highlight examples of best (open) visual story-telling practice. With #PhonarEd we are setting out to address the challenges experienced by academics/instructors who are as yet unfamiliar with the remix culture that Creative Commons licenses (for example) grant access to (our most FAQs are is it okay and how do I use/adapt/adopt this?). We have found that to be passively open is not enough, with #PhonarEd we seek to continue our policy of active openness’

From Reclaim Open Learning,
September 2013
3.2 Wider developments at Coventry University

In 2009 Coventry University Media Department developed the Open Media Strategy in response to changes in the media and communications professions and the educational landscape, brought about by both an increasingly networked world and emerging open practices. Technological changes in digital media have challenged traditional ownership of content - particularly in relation to broadcasting and sharing information and have enabled wide-scale access to the means of recording, producing and publishing/sharing. This has transformed the relationships and power balance around ownership of media messages (Ratto & Boler, 2014). Notable examples of this include the impact on news reporting by public contributions through social media; on professional photography models; and publishing models. Professionals working in the media and communications field have been adapting to these changes and struggling to respond to an erosion of traditional communication channels and technologies.

There were other developments happening in parallel at the University, which highlight a responsiveness to the changing learning technology landscape, a readiness for cultural change and a certain openness to risk. In 2008 Peter Woodbridge was working as a researcher at the University and was an early adopter of social media. Peter took a proposal to the university aiming to transform their digital presence through the adoption of iTunes U (apple.co/SWXwT9) to share University open podcasts. Although some staff were nervous about these open approaches, Professor Madeleine Atkins, the Vice Chancellor at the time was very supportive and was interested in establishing a global presence for the institution. The institution became the 1st University of this type to have open podcasts on iTunes U (bit.ly/1LFTsQC) (and 6th in the UK overall). A key driver was the need to attract international students and to support University marketing.

The institution was also establishing the CURVE open repository (bit.ly/1U4p5FT), which linked in with other projects across the university. Gary Hall from the Media Department was taking a leading role in opening access to research in the UK, and the Department of Media was providing many of the open podcasts. Alongside this, Jonathan Worth began opening some of the department’s classes in the BA (Hons) Photography (bit.ly/1KnuIL2) (Phonar phonar.org) (Photography and narrative) and (Picbod picbod.covmedia.co.uk) (Picturing the body) courses (described in more detail below). Peter joined the Department as a lecturer in 2010 and established the open Creative Activism class (bit.ly/ILSVHgr) as part of the BA (Hons) Media Production Degree (mediaproduction.covmedia.co.uk). Peter also developed a mobile application (bit.ly/1GKhUsx) to support the Picbod open class which integrated tweets, photographs and podcasts, and allowed people who were interested to follow the course in “real time” or at their own convenience. Jonathan Shaw further developed the app (bit.ly/1g7mYBJ) to allow students to take and upload their own photographs, enhanced sharing mechanisms and searching all of #PICBOD posts.

[1]

4 For a definition of Open Educational Practices and links to further sources and discussion see this page on the UKOER wiki (bit.ly/1HvABXo)
5 For a description of different open courses and links to further information see this page on the UKOER wiki (bit.ly/1GMuGHP)
6 bit.ly/1GWV5Vy
7 Lewis, Dewi interview in Shaw, J. (Ed.) Newfotoscapes, 2014 bit.ly/1Iqg7OJ
The Centre of Disruptive Media (disruptivemedia.org.uk) was initiated by Gary Hall and Shaun Hides and established by the Department of Media at Coventry University School of Art & Design in 2011 to study, research and experiment with disruptive digital technologies to explore new models and new economies.

The open media classes have become one aspect of this work, which has the potential to ‘disrupt’ higher education models, practice, structures and markets. The shift toward a ‘globalised higher education market’ brings challenges and opportunities to the sector with the potential to transform traditional models of practice. In a recent publication several members of the Coventry University School of Art and Design provide an overview of the wider international and national context that underpinned developments at Coventry (van Mourik Broekman et al, 2014). They also consider the more local (institutional) complexities that impact on open education approaches and the various stakeholders involved.

3.3 Coventry open class model/s

There are several narratives to consider in looking at how the Coventry open media classes developed and have since been adapted. These include the stories of managers, teachers, registered students, open students and open professionals and interested amateurs. This study aims to bring those narratives together into a coherent story.

A range of people were involved in establishing and supporting the open classes. Lecturer Jonathan Worth led the transformation of teaching approach with the establishment of the Picbod (picbod.covmedia.co.uk) (Picturing the body) and Phonar (phonar.org) (Photography and narrative) classes. Matt Johnston, was originally a teaching assistant on the Picbod course and later joined as a lecturer on the open classes. Peter Woodbridge led the Creative Activism classes (bit.ly/1LSVHgr) and Martyn Lee led the Living in a digital world (bit.ly/1HYRyYh) class. Shaun Hides as Head of media department wrote the JISC UKOER3 funding application and provided managerial support, enabling and encouraging innovative practice and Jonathan Shaw (Associate head of media Department (Innovation, Profile and Research) developed the second generation of apps and other platforms. Different approaches, based on participation within open networks, were adopted and trialled in ten week open classes which has ultimately led to the most effective elements being permanently incorporated into the undergraduate programme and the development of a new Open masters degree.

The coming together of this group of people at the right time is an important factor in the innovative approaches, but much of the inspiration, guidance and mentoring came from outside the HE sector and probably accounts for some of the more innovative methods used.

Inspiration

One of the most interesting aspect of these classes is how much they reflect the changing media landscape and how far they were informed and led by the parallel activities of several innovative media professionals. Jonathan Worth, as a freelance editorial photographer, had been experimenting with ‘new business-models for photography that leverage, rather than fight, the Internet’, which is illustrated in his experiment with author Cory Doctorow®.
When Jonathan Worth joined the Department of Media at Coventry he brought three essential elements that informed the development of the Open media classes:

» A fresh view of what it meant to be a professional photographer in an open networked world

» A network of innovative individuals from a range of professions such as Cory Doctorow (author), Fred Ritchin (photographer and now dean of the International centre of photography in New York), David Campbell (Head of international centre of photography media lab in New York), Stephen Mayes (Director of VII photo agency) and John Levy (founder of FOTO8 and HOST Gallery)

» No traditional teaching background

Jonathan was not wedded to traditional academic practice and was open to considering different approaches to teaching - both in terms of what a modern photography course should include, but also in which methods to use. He was able to engage a network of professionals in deciding what to teach but also involved them in the classes as well. In terms of actual teaching practice Jonathan offers the following list of people that inspire and inform his practice. (See right)

It is significant that the staff at Coventry were open to this fresh perspective, which was further enhanced by input from Matt Johnston and Peter Woodbridge. Jonathan, Matt and Peter all highlighted the value of having Shaun Hides, Jonathan Shaw and Gary Hall to ‘navigate the institution’ on their behalf, which meant they did not have to negotiate with University IT, marketing and legal departments, and allowed them to concentrate on the classes.
As early as 2009 Shaun Hides produced an Open Media Strategy to inform the activities and development of the Department of Media in Coventry University’s School of Art and Design. This approach reflected developments in the wider media professions, the educational landscape and the intellectual experiments around piracy and open access in humanities scholarship instigated by Gary Hall and it also framed the recognition of the need for Coventry’s media courses to adapt to these changes. The strategy meant that it was possible to support the initial two classes opened-up as a way of enhancing the existing degree course in photography. The Picbod (picbod.covmedia.co.uk) (Picturing the Body) (from 2009-10) and Phonar (phonar.org) (Photography and Narrative) (from 2010-11) courses were the first courses to include two ten week open classes as part of the Undergraduate Photography Degree. In 2011 During the UKOER COMC project the Creative Activism Class (bit.ly/1U73DQF) and the Living in a digital world (bit.ly/1HTYRYh) class were added. This enabled a low risk approach to try different technologies, teaching approaches and support methods which have been adapted, re-mixed and re-written over the last five years.

This has informed the re-approval of the Photography Bachelor of Arts Degree course and an open Masters course (launching Sept 2015). This is a remarkable illustration of how far the experiences of the department, academic staff and registered and open students have convinced institutional managers of the scalability of the model/s. By opening up classes, the teachers developed a network of connected professionals and learners, which enrich the experience of the paying and attending student. The course has become the ‘most over subscribed in the University’. Equally, the open photography classes have enjoyed engagement by individuals and communities who have traditionally not been able to access Coventry courses through geographical, financial or cultural barriers.

"This approach is driven by the desire to reveal and facilitate the individual learner’s practice and to explore the potential of visual storytelling using a medium in perpetual technological motion. In itself this is not that new, but the real game changer is the resulting collaboration in a live, mentored and open space with the class (lecturers and learners) in direct dialogue with its wider external community of interest.
Jonathan Shaw, NewFotoScapes, 2014

"The last ten week iteration of phonar had over seventy people with editing rights on the schedule representing over 45 different Universities and the last iteration of Picbod was adopted, adapted and run independently by Matt Johnston applying his successes at turning [online] numbers into names and actions (with the photobookclubborg). The last iteration of Phonar had over 35000 people come to the WordPress version of the class from 139 countries, we haven’t had resources to accurately record the Flickr, Soundcloud, Youtube, Google+ and Twitter environments though the classes thrive there also. Following Phonar2012 the students demanded their next class be run open and along the same lines - which Coventry University assented to – our proviso being that they (the students) designed it. Phonar2012 graduated with the highest percentage of First Class Honours in the history of the course.
From Reclaim Open Learning, September 2013
Open class models

Initially the Coventry open media classes enhanced traditional classroom-based UG courses, which included lectures, seminars, assignments and project work. The open elements were delivered across ten weeks during the second or third year. Attending students remained the central focus of the course and had the opportunity to engage with a much broader community of open students and professionals. The element of choice was important and paying students had control of which aspects of the global community they engaged with and, with the support of their instructors, identified which would be of value to them individually. These conversations and connected experiences enriched the content authored by the team and had the potential to transform the relationships between learners, teachers, working professionals and interested amateurs.

The open media classes aimed to be connected, participatory experiences which relied on online contributions from the range of participants and as such, generated a significant amount of content from a diverse range of contributors. Practical tasks, informed by the thematic content, were assigned, but allowed space for personal interpretation, implicitly encouraging a sense of ownership. These contributions included blog posts, comments and responses, images, videos, sound files, tweets, and conversations. It was important to try to ensure that this content was aggregated effectively and made accessible, and that the process resulted in resources of a high standard, establishing Coventry as a trusted provider, so a clear and visible code of conduct was developed alongside a collective review system/moderation group.

The utilisation of various social media (as appropriate for each class) meant that staff and students may have had to learn how to use different media effectively. This approach required students and staff to enhance their digital, visual and media literacies and ultimately started to transform the focus of the course. This experience informed the development of the Department’s social media good practice guidance, and in turn influenced the code of conduct adopted by the university. Beyond such baseline good practice, in order to work effectively as media professionals digital media and visual literacies (fluencies) are essential to enable people to adjust to new models of professional practice, which include a range of knowledge and skills such as digital storytelling, managing an online presence, networking, licensing and ownership issues, managing content and metadata and marketing. Coventry Open Media Courses focus on equipping students to become accomplished professionals that can adapt and respond to changing professional parameters.

Staff activities to support the classes began to adapt as they increasingly became curators of open online content and as boundaries between learner, professional and teacher became blurred. The changing roles of both staff and students is an important aspect of this story.

In the early stages, course content was uploaded to a blog (as well as onto the institutional platform) with the presumption that “all material generated/curated by staff will be ‘open access’; as will any material, or contributions made/offered by external contributors - the terms of these contributions will be explicit and visible to all. As contributors add comments, review students, send commentary ideas or links, or when they come to give talks/specialist classes, their contributions go live as soon as possible.”

COMC project, 2012

In the case of these classes, “the educator’s role is to define the landscape and curate a coherent learning-journey through chosen specialists who generate a wide range of content.”

Jonathan Worth, 2012 Jisc online case study, 2012
Technologies
The Coventry open media classes made use of existing technologies with the intention that participants would not have to alter their online habits – both content and participation are made accessible through various desktop and mobile platforms (laptops, tablets, iphone/android phones, ipod touch and PCs). They were supported by light and readily available software: free blogging software, twitter, iTunesU, podcasts, vimeo etc., as well as Coventry’s online learning platform CUonline (which is moodle based). This approach meant that time and resources were not devoted to establishing and testing new platforms.

Adopting a regular Wordpress blog to host the online elements of the course, removed some of the institutional barriers to entry that an internal university system might incur and also meant that the course content was accessible to search engines (21% of visits came from Google searches). This blog acted as a hub which aggregated content using tags (for example #phonar), and an iPhone app was also created as a mobile tool for dynamic engagement with this hub, which has been downloaded over 2,000 times. A recent development included the need to establish fully SSL Certification Encryption and Authentication for the Wordpress blogs to prevent hacking and security breaches. It is notable that the University marketing department did initially question the use of a Wordpress blog but on seeing the significant number of hits (over 6000) compared to the University website, realised that this approach was generating considerable traffic - other University departments are now encouraged to do the same.

Assessment
“Traditional” approaches to assessment continued in the campus-based elements of the course, but the open online aspects offered an opportunity for students to receive individual feedback from a diverse mix of teaching staff, other students and the professionals who agreed to participate in the course. Peer assessment and feedback have been discussed widely in recent research (Evans, 2013) and brings it’s own challenges and benefits. Whilst many of the research studies are with small numbers of students the Coventry open models are interesting in that there are potentially large numbers of participants (up to 900 students attending an online class and thousands of potential visitors who could comment or feedback of student work). These kinds of numbers can, inevitably, raise issues around consistency so the team responded by providing a sheltered space (online forum requiring sign-in) for feedback to take place - aiming to develop the trust and confidence needed to offer and receive one-to-one feedback. This approach gives some editorial control to moderators who can deal with negative or “trolling” behaviour and the sign-in was expected to limit troll-like behaviour. Another tool used to support feedback was the aggregated twitter stream, although the limited character format limits in-depth feedback.

Staff implementing the open classes tried to be flexible with learning outcomes and assessment with a view to ensuring that the focus for students was on developing their portfolios, rather than their grades. The aim was to encourage autonomy, self-direction and critical thinking and to support the development of twenty first century skills (Jenkins, 2009).
Ownership and licensing

The team developing the Coventry open media classes obtained support and approval from the senior research management of the University. However, the Creative Commons licensing of content (CC BY SA) and their extensive use of unrestricted platforms did not strictly conform to existing University IT policy\(^9\). The University deputy vice chancellor for research was aware of this ‘conflict’ and nonetheless endorsed the project. This enabled the team to adopt and test open approaches.

In relation to ownership of student contributions, the Legal compliance officer confirmed that the University asserts IP and copyright over all Coventry University Student work produced within a teaching and learning environment. However, in practice the University always recognizes the moral rights of students over their own intellectual products and would always work to enable them to exploit any potential tangible/financial benefit under specific permissions. The University agreed for student work to be part of the classes under a CC BY SA licence i.e. with their proper authorial acknowledgment/recognition. Indeed raising awareness of ownership and rights is a significant part of digital and media literacy and, by nature, of the classes themselves.

\(^9\) This is of course a relative term, alongside the development of Open classes the Media Department and its courses were also establishing a reputation for innovation within “conventional” teaching learning and assessment, so courses like photography incorporated self-defined assessment tasks, innovative collaborative professional projects and assessments requiring external collaborators.

\(^{10}\) bit.ly/1JwqcLr
4. Findings and outcomes

4.1 What factors led to the development of the open classes?

One of the most challenging issues for funders of innovation in education is how transferable the resulting innovations are to the wider sector, so it can be useful to identify which critical factors enable specific innovations, with a view to seeing if these can be replicated or are appropriate in other contexts. When summarising the critical factors to support open practice (bit.ly/1Iylmfj) in the HEFCE UKOER/SCORE Review Report (bit.ly/1C5DoUY) the authors began by considering the barriers to open practice and then moved on to discuss what supported both practice change and institutional change. If we look at the barriers highlighted in the UKOER Programme evaluation we see a range of operational, cultural and strategic factors that impact on open approaches. Lack of institutional strategy and support, lack of time to engage and innovate and lack of awareness of the benefits all emerged as significant barriers. UKOER projects (of which the Coventry Open Media Classes project was one) identified several ways to overcome these barriers, including activities around increasing engagement and awareness for staff and students, developing technical structures to support open practice and strong partnership approaches. Considering the critical factors to support open practice takes us away from focussing on the reasons why we can't do something and allows us to consider aspects of our own context that could be open to innovation and change.

There has been significant interest in the open classes at national and international conferences and events so it is useful to consider what factors led to the development of these. No one single factor can account for such innovative approaches. These classes were the result of a combination of factors and serendipity also played its part as the combination of the right people at the right time made things happen. The open media classes were not developed in a vacuum but were, and are, an integral part of a range of activities at Coventry that happened in parallel, such as the Research activities at the Centre for Disruptive Media, a series of open access and editable publications by Professor Gary Hall, the development of bespoke mobile applications, as well as collaborative activities with other art schools. These activities fed into and supported each other and generated a culture of openness and innovation.

As described in the introduction, the changes to open media professions and practice has had a significant impact on the course focus and content leading to a reconsideration of the educational needs of media professionals (particularly reflecting the impact of developments in open licensing/piracy, networking in a global context, and social media). This provided an opportunity for the teaching teams to experiment with new approaches. Alongside this there have been changes in the global and UK higher education landscape around open practices in research and teaching and the emergence of different models for open online networked courses. Whilst there has been a tendency for a focus on content and teaching resources, particularly in relation to Open Educational Resources (OER) there have also been changes in the education approaches from the ‘broadcast’ of content model to one of creative collaboration, curation and re-appropriation (Shaw, 2014). The Coventry open media classes have been an important part of this development in the UK as they have, in many ways, led the way by offering small scale models and solutions that allowed experimentation, highlighted successes and allowed for failure without huge risk.

At the very least there was an openness to change in the Department of Media that allowed these developments to happen. There was an acknowledgement that existing approaches were not as effective as they could be and a desire to improve the courses and the student experience. Another factor was the understanding that there was a very competitive marketplace where other educational institutions had developed their own niche - and a recognition that Coventry needed to do the same. Whilst they did not initially know precisely what changes were needed or how to achieve these, they knew that it was time for change. This led to bringing new staff into the team with completely different perspectives, and this is,
without doubt, one of the most important factors that led to the open classes. The appointment of Jonathan Worth, a professional photographer, who had been experimenting with new open models of practice and who had an extensive network of media professionals who were also challenging traditional models of publishing, brought a completely new perspective to the BA photography course. Jonathan was not wedded to existing traditional models of education and brought fresh ideas to the existing course. An important factor here is that the Department was open to adopting ideas and practices from outside the traditional HE sector. Although challenging this allowed them to question existing academic practice and enabled innovation and experimentation. This has led to a different approach to staff recruitment and the ongoing appointment of academics who are pushing boundaries of their own practice, which ensures an environment of innovation and challenge. This is a very brave approach as it is, potentially, much more difficult to manage. However it has meant that other staff have taken on the role as champions of the classes and the approaches, and is likely to be more sustainable than relying on one individual. The notion of charismatic leaders and academic champions did emerge regularly as a factor for success in the UKOER programme but it also highlighted the danger of relying on one individual. For Coventry having several champions helps to take the classes forward into open courses and the addition of new staff brings new ideas. Other institutions can not, of course, replicate how this team came together but they can take on the key message around bringing individual innovators together to support creative responses to problem spaces.

In terms of wider institutional factors it is notable that Shaun Hides, as the head of department, took an Open media policy to institutional managers in 2009 and the effectiveness of this approach enabled the team to engage the then vice chancellor Madeleine Atkins in conversations around open practice. Early on the VC allowed some leeway for the team to experiment and later actively supported and encouraged the open classes and the team, shortly thereafter the deputy vice chancellor for Student Experience also became a strong advocate of the open classes. So the initial element of risk was primarily at Department level and this initial low profile approach has meant that the institution was not concerned about high profile risk management (of large scale MOOCs) which allowed space for innovation. There was evidence of some institutional openness to ‘risky’ change and innovation, which allowed the space for experimentation and, potentially, failure. Coventry University has a significant track record of supporting innovation around teaching and learning, which gave some context within which this could happen. This highlights how important the factor of trust is to support new practice. This includes trust from the institutional managers to allow innovative approaches, trust from academics that departmental managers will navigate the institution on their behalf, and most importantly trust in opening the courses to outside contributors. The latter was a risk in that it opened students to comments and feedback from potentially anyone and could have had an impact on what they felt willing to share. The team dealt with this risk by being responsive to students and providing alternatives (such as a closed forum) if demanded. The resulting conversations around openness and managing what they share is an important part of the class.

The one year funding available from Jisc (through the UKOER Programme) allowed the open classes to be developed further, but importantly provided resources to expand them and included time for evaluation and reflection. The latter is vital to allow staff to consider the full impact of their activities and to adapt and refine as appropriate. Being a funded Jisc project offered a range of support mechanisms, from important dissemination routes, the benefits of expertise (such as that around open licensing, evaluation, technical aspects), networking opportunities with other innovators and the chance to situate the project’s practice in the wider national or international picture.
4.2 What kinds of institutional and departmental structures, strategies, policies and processes can support these models?

Coventry open media classes developed incrementally, an approach which did not, therefore, require wholesale institutional buy-in in the early stages but allowed the team to test things out and take smaller risks. The Department’s Open media policy underpinned the developments and innovations as it identified five key elements that establish a foundation for teaching on the open classes - Tactical, Sustainable, Engaged, Visible and Collaborative. Policies such as these are essential to support developments and can offer staff a blueprint to support changing practice.

The open classes were part of the undergraduate BA (Hons) in Photography (bit.ly/1KnuIL2) which already aligned with Coventry University strategy and had undergone appropriate validation processes. Jonathan Shaw secured funding from the Vice Chancellor to develop open platforms to deliver content (such as phone apps, digital publishing software and iTunesU) which indicated senior management support and awareness of the potentials of open technologies but there was no specific institutional position on open approaches to teaching. Institutional strategy did, however, support technology enhanced learning and participatory/student-centred learning and teaching strategies and senior managers did show support for the Jisc funded COMC project.

As the classes progressed they were able to gather evidence and respond to any questions as they emerged. - “The VC came to us and asked how we were going to raise the course profile, improve the experience for the students, grow their international opportunities and save money. Well, I was able to show how we’d been very successful attracting large numbers to #phonar and that we’ve had people go on to assist Annie Leibovitz, Trent Park, Steve Pyke, Elinor Carucci. It’s now the hardest course in the uni to get onto, and by using existing social media environments it all came at no extra cost.”

Jonathan Worth, 2012 (bbc.in/1RS4NeS)

Using free online resources and tools negated the need for significant IT support but the extensive use of unrestricted platforms did not strictly conform to existing University IT policy. The University deputy vice chancellor for research was aware of this ‘conflict’ and nonetheless endorsed the project. This enabled the team to adopt and test open approaches, but these kinds of approaches need to balance effectively with institutional technologies and systems. Initially, the University marketing team expressed concern about the use of a noninstitutional wordpress blog, but the sheer volume of traffic provided tangible evidence that this approach was attracting visitors from all over the world and had potential for raising the profile of Coventry University. If the Institution had decided to prohibit the use of the blog it would have had a significant impact on how the classes were run. The classes made use of a wide range of different social media services but the Wordpress site acted as the hub for the distributed network - a key principle of the approaches adopted.
Open media classes at Coventry University

Findings and outcomes

For open initiatives such as these the issue of ownership and licencing requires clarity of policy and practice at an institutional level and at the point of contact by course participants. The team obtained support and approval from the senior research management of the University. In relation to ownership of student contributions, the Legal compliance officer confirmed that the University asserts IP and copyright over all Coventry University student work produced within a teaching and learning environment. However, the University agreed for student work to be part of the classes under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (bit.ly/1oMv8B7) (CC-BY-SA) i.e. with their proper authorial acknowledgment/ recognition. The challenge for institutions, as described by Jonathan Worth, is in accepting the changes that new models of teaching bring.

Raising awareness of ownership and rights is a significant part of digital and media literacy and, by nature, of the classes themselves. It is particularly important that the students understand the concept and practicalities of open licensing both in terms of participating in the course and for their own future professional practice. It is worth noting that the open classes at Coventry happen in the second and third years which allows time for students to develop trust in the Institution, their teachers and the other students and also time to develop their confidence in opening their content like this. In the UKOER Programme several project teams included open student content and involving students in this way helped to educate them in open licensing issues, however several projects identified tensions (bit.ly/1GYOaeI) around student perceptions about making content that they had ‘paid for’ available to others. This requires a shift in perspective for both institutions and students around the role of content on a course - both that created by the teaching teams and that developed by students through their learning activities. This is discussed further in section 4.5.

The Blog collates all these resources, such as the lectures and seminar activities – each open class session also include notes, recordings and student annotations - both sequentially as a series of post and under specific categories and through linking to additional external site, such as Vimeo, or Podbean. The over-arching aim of making this material available is to lower the barriers to anyone accessing these classes and resources. The blog acts like a ‘hub’ within a networked community.

COMC Final Report, 2012

“Much like me thinking I was just an image maker, the uni thought its product was ‘knowledge’ and their old business model relied on keeping a tight grip on that... Well, I knew it wasn’t my product as a teacher. On a personal level I also found out that this stuff has applications in other areas too - education being a case in point, where I realised the real thing of value was not the knowledge but the learning experience. The message of that experience is amplified by opening it up - hence the success of the open classes.”

Jonathan Worth, 2012 (bbc.in/1RS4NeS)
Between 2008 and 2012 the Department of Media rose from 85th in league tables to 38th which was noticed within the institution and senior managers showed interest in the approach the department had taken including the open classes. Shaun Hides and Jonathan Worth provided a briefing to Governors highlighting the open classes and wider issues around MOOCs. The response was positive and it was agreed that a University-wide approach needed to be taken. The Department was then asked to prepare a proposal to work with Coventry’s London campus around open classes.

Following this in 2013, the University held a research event for senior managers across the institution where Gary Hall and Shaun Hides pitched two ideas: a research centre on the University of the 21st Century and a “skunk works”/lab in which to experiment with teaching practice, these pitches lead to the idea of a disruptive media learning lab. This was approved by the vice chancellor and later the Lab was given the 3rd floor of the Lanchester Library and a significant funding investment over three years to develop their approach. The Lab is focused on four key areas of activity - openness (research and teaching), co-creation and game based approaches, the flipped classroom and new models of online/distance learning. This large physical space and ongoing funding represents a solid commitment by the University and is testament to the raised profile of the Department within the University.

The Department are working towards introducing fully open courses (2015/16) which align well with the institutional strategy on graduate enterprise and employability, as they have a clear focus on ensuring that courses aim to equip students with appropriate skills for the changing creative media professions. Moving from open classes to fully open courses is a major step forward and indicates a clear commitment from the institution. Although Coventry started by adapting classes in existing courses they have reached a point now where the existing Photography Bachelor of Arts Degree course went through a re-approval process and an open Masters course has been validated and supported institutionally. This is a notable development and a clear illustration of how far the experiences of the department, academic staff and registered and open students have convinced institutional managers of the scalability of the model/s.
4.3 What kinds of support do staff need to implement these new open connected approaches?

In 2013 the UKOER programme evaluation team carried out surveys and interviews with individuals who had been involved in the Programme and they identified lack of time as the most significant barrier for individuals engaging with open practice. Second, was a lack of awareness of the benefits and the next top barriers (bit.ly/1KsmNxB) identified were lack of institutional support and lack of institutional strategy. Other barriers were also identified as significant but it is interesting to note that three of the top four choices relate to being supported by their institution. The Coventry open media classes were led by innovative teachers with a commitment to open practice. This was a vital component of the success of the initiative but as argued earlier managerial support was also a crucial factor. Managerial support in this context ranges from being given endorsement from senior managers to adopt CC licences and utilise noninstitutional technologies to being given time and space by department managers to be experimental.

As described in the next section, teaching activities do change with these models - so for example, aggregating and curating content becomes important which may be balanced with additional input from external specialists in guiding and supporting students. The approaches adopted did take more time and required teacher input outside ‘normal work hours’, with online activity happening across time zones. Staff need to be committed to open approaches, to being experimental and to troubleshooting as new approaches are tested, this requires confidence and skills. Put another way, they need to lack attachment to the traditional approaches, but have a willingness to learn how to do new things. For established academic staff trying out very different models can be challenging when they are also learning how to adapt with new technologies and teaching approaches and they need appropriate support mechanisms to share their experiences and responses to the new approaches. This is what the team describe as ‘the adoption curve’

There are specific challenges and difficulties engendered by the fact that even within one department there are large variations in the awareness, acknowledgement and engagement with the ‘Open’ agenda. Therefore, as each individual/group is at a different point on the adoption curve it is actually quite difficult for colleagues to easily share information and mentor/support each other.

COMC Project Final Report, 2012

This is where short term project funding, such as that provided by Jisc, can help departments make space for innovative practice as well as time for reflection and evaluation, not only with colleagues within the institution but also those from other institutions in different contexts. Staff need time to learn to adopt new technologies and time to look at other models allowing them to adjust to new open approaches.

Even when projects or initiatives are led by teachers, there are still challenges in trying to engage all staff with open approaches. UKOER projects adopted a wide range of techniques to engage staff and raise awareness (bit.ly/1GUuqWi) but an interesting approach at Coventry is to employ staff with an openness or willingness to be experimental with their own teaching, to question their own practice and to look outside their own practice to what is happening in the wider context. The Coventry open classes require teaching and support staff to be competent with social media and confident about their own digital identities. Each of the staff leading open classes have their own blogs and offer exemplars to their students.
4.4 Open classes curriculum design and delivery
The teaching team at Coventry were aware that the curricula of their media courses needed to change to reflect the needs of professional media practitioners and to enable their courses to compete with other Media Departments. Shaun Hides presented a new vision for the Department in 2009 which was informed by the changing student demographic, open approaches to learning, technological developments and the changing needs of media professions.

This identified five key principles and was supported and endorsed by the dean of school:

1. Tactical use of technologies - taking into account mobile media and the convergence of student and institutional technologies

2. Engaging students with the discipline and the changing media professional landscape

3. The need to reconfigure teaching spaces to encourage activity rather than passive listening to encourage students to see themselves as practitioners whilst they are learning

4. Promoting visibility of both the University, academics and students through the engagement of visiting speakers and with students being visible to communities of practice whilst they are still learning

5. Working collaboratively as a principle supported by reconfigurable working spaces, technologies and teaching approaches

These five principles are clearly evident in the approaches adopted in the open classes.
share photographs, and search the class content. Using technologies and services that already exist has an advantage in that staff and students may already be familiar with them and can continue to use them once they leave the institution. There is, of course, a challenge for institutions in not having control over the continued existence of external platforms or in the possibility of changing terms and conditions, but this does reflect the notion of tactical use - and the need for adaptability as a media professional. The Media Department also instigated other tactical technological innovations - including from 2012, the ‘lab-in-a-bag’, a one-to-one laptop scheme. The distributed laptops and software packages were not in themselves necessary for the development of the open classes, but provided a supportive context in which they could continue to flourish.

By considering the impact of social and networked technologies on media professionals and using them in the open classes, the curriculum reflects those changing needs and offers support for students to learn visual literacy, incorporating digital storytelling, identity management and other digital and media literacies. Similarly, open professional practice has been integrated into the course and is modelled by the approaches taken in the open classes so students will develop an online presence, engage with ownership and licensing issues and become open practitioners through the use of open and free technologies.

2. Engaging students with the discipline and the changing media professional landscape

The focus of the BA (Hons) Photography course is “What does it mean to be a twenty first century photographer?” and the open classes, in particular, explore this by engaging practicing photographers from around the world, as well as open students and enthusiastic amateurs. The conversations around this form the core of the classes and the teaching activities encourage students to consider where they fit as practitioners and in which directions they may want to take. Classes are informed by the experiences of Jonathan Worth, Matt Johnston and other photography tutors (Paul Smith, Jonathan Shaw et al) and other media professionals and in the open classes this specifically includes consideration of the language of openness and the culture of remixing that is emerging through open licences such as Creative Commons. Whilst this could happen in a traditional classroom, the fact that the open classes mirror some of the challenges, opportunities and mechanisms affecting contemporary professional practitioners, emphasises the issues and engages students with an ‘authentic’ experience. Students themselves develop their own personal peer networks by choosing which conversations to connect with and which relationships to cultivate, as do the external participants and contributors. The element of selection allows all course participants to engage at varying levels with other people and other content, and reflects personal interests and pathways. These networks and connections have the potential to last far beyond the time constraints of the classes or of the course. The varied mechanisms being used to support engagement exist outside the course dimensions and the conversations and content also remain as stimulus for ongoing conversations once the classes have ended. Indeed the course boundaries become fluid in terms of both time and space.

The learning activities focus on the idea of being a trusted source, a credible witness, and being a publisher as well as a storyteller. The three strands that come together in the course are art design, storytelling and publishing.

Jonathan Worth, 2012 (bit.ly/1sZMcEv)
3. Reconfigure teaching spaces
This can be applied to both physical and virtual spaces and supports an integrated approach to both kinds of spaces. Under the leadership of Jonathan Shaw, a significant refurbishment of the teaching spaces (and teaching schedules) was undertaken in 2010-11 to make them more flexible and to capitalise on the open media strategy. The physical spaces now offer a familiar and safe place for students to develop their confidence and develop relationships with teachers and other students. Broadening these spaces in the third year to open global virtual platforms takes the activities into an international arena where students can present themselves as practitioners whilst they are learning. Safer virtual spaces, such as closed forums, can also be offered to students if they find the openness too challenging for some activities.

4. Promoting visibility
The open classes play an important role in promoting the visibility of both the University, academics and students. The classes have raised the profile of the University worldwide as the models adopted have been described as ‘revolutionary’ and ‘inspirational’. Staff who developed the open classes have received awards and recognition, and student recruitment figures have increased dramatically. A fundamental principle of the open classes has been to place students on an international platform where they can build and explore their own professional identities. The media department students have, more than any other Department, taken advantage of University Speed Plus (bit.ly/1lsCcfF) Awards which support students to establish businesses. Through the open classes students begin to establish themselves as professional practitioners and the extensive networking opportunities provide a global platform to launch themselves into the community of practice. Several students have been offered exciting professional opportunities as a result of having their work seen in this way.

5. Working collaboratively
A fundamental aspect of the open classes is the move from a traditional broadcast model of delivery, to collaborative and connected interactions, where the notion of ‘expert’ is much more fluid. This model allows expertise to be drawn into the classes as appropriate by inviting specific ‘external’ contributors and participants depending on the nature of the class and the schedule. This has established an ever-broadening network of connections, since one contributor brings with them an existing series of links and networks. This helps to develop the network beyond the class and remains connected to the class through the aggregated hashtags. This connected approach, and the networks that sustain it, are one of the most vital and transformative elements of the open classes. In terms of assessment the impact of peer assessment and feedback on learners also needs to be considered. There are issues around the authenticity of feedback from

These classes took place physically at Coventry University. I have always derived my energy from the people in the same room. The core course is not massive - 10-30 students in person. And not all of what goes on in the physical classroom is accessible to the outside world. But adding the online dimension set loose a generative force: there are direct correlations between the subject matter I teach and the mode of delivery; one has to embody the other. Teaching about networks couldn’t be confined to the physical classroom, although that is where the course is rooted.

Jonathan Worth, 2012 (bit.ly/1sZMcEv)
Open participants so an important role of lecturers is that of moderating these and maintaining positive interactions. This is not to simply accept a traditional view, which equates authentic feedback with in-house academics – but rather to remember that giving feedback entails mutual responsibilities and the mechanisms by which such relationships can be established are still being worked out for many developing open educational practices. One aspect of working collaboratively is the way in which the student voice is incorporated and responded to, both within the classes and also in the dialogue between students and the course providers. Implementing a completely new way of teaching is challenging for students and the Department had to be responsive to them when some of them expressed concern about some content being completely open. Providing a safe authenticated forum for feedback was one response that showed how far the students were heard. There were also instances when students decided to work collaboratively within the networks but outside the formal class, such as the launch of an online photography magazine and also a physical exhibition of work created during the class.

These five principles offer a useful framework for the open classes and for Department courses generally. They allow for new technological developments but do not make the technology the central focus of the course development or delivery. The framework acknowledges the importance of balancing the physical and virtual spaces - something which has emerged as an important aspect for the Department. The concept of openness is not identified as one single key principle, but can be applied across all of them, as can closed approaches as appropriate.

As the Department continues to embrace openness there are still some questions to be investigated.

» It is worth considering if there is an optimum number of students in a class for the open element to work. In the first iteration, low class numbers of 9-12 students meant that opening the course expanded the number of conversations and range of people involved. Now that classes could include as many as 40 students the group dynamics are likely to change and the open classes may work differently.

» How far the content developed during open classes can be reused, either by the Department or by those outside the University. There are questions about the return on investment that are interesting to department managers; so for example does the extra time needed to provide open classes lessen as the open content is developed, or does new content have to be developed at the same rate. Although much of the content is generated by students and external contributors, significant content is still produced by the lecturers to keep classes fresh.

» Jisc funding allowed the Department to devote extra time to the classes. How would conventional classes have benefitted in similar or different ways if extra staffing had been available.

» How does the Department maintain the archive of class content and how far they support activity that might occur outside official class timescales. Automated aggregation mechanisms can do this to a certain extent but there is still a need to ensure that the virtual space remains a safe place to be. Does the open community ‘police’ itself in this regard or is there an onus on the Department to do this?

This is an important period for the team as they review the open classes and move towards more open courses. The fact that the Department has developed new open courses (from 2015-16) and that the Institution has approved them indicates that the models investigated during the open classes are transferable and scalable across the whole curriculum. Another key question for the Institution is how far this is transferable and scalable to other courses offered by the University.
4.5 What was the impact of the classes on the various stakeholders?

There is clear evidence of positive engagement of both registered students and open practitioners in the open classes, but there are also more subtle indicators of the impact of the classes on a wide range of stakeholders. However, it is important to note that the open classes developed alongside other innovative activities both in the Media Department and at Coventry University, in the wider educational landscape and in a changing global context, so not all of these impacts may be solely due to the open classes.

Institutional level

As discussed earlier, Coventry University was committed to open approaches from 2008 with open podcasts on iTunes U (bit.ly/1LFTsQC) and an open repository (bit.ly/1U4p5FT). The vice chancellor was supportive of open approaches and saw the potential for these to impact positively on marketing, particularly to an international student body. This kind of endorsement from institutional managers sends out clear messages to staff across the institution and is likely to have had an impact on the development of the open classes. The institution became the first of the new Universities to offer open podcasts and was ranked 6th in the whole of the UK. In 2010 the University was ranked at 85 in the UK league tables which has moved to position 50 by 2015\(^1\). This may or may not reflect the Institution’s standing in real terms - the University has moved 30 places in the last 5 years, which could be due, in part, to it’s higher profile, increased applicants for courses, and student satisfaction and attainment.

Although many of the open initiatives, including the open classes, have been developed over the last seven or eight years, the institution has received significant media coverage since 2011. The open classes have received a lot of coverage, particularly in the photography media as the industry has widely recognised the work of Jonathan Worth and Matt Johnston. This coverage is as much about the changing media profession as about the classes but has highlighted developments in photography education and has raised the profile of Coventry University. Examples of the kind of coverage in mainstream press include:

- **Professional Photographer** (bit.ly/1LHFb5Y) - Turn on, tune in, drop in...to Phonar, 2011
- **Wired Magazine** - Free Online Class Shakes up photo education, 2011 (wrd.cm/1Juw0lZ)
- **Times Higher Education** (bit.ly/1Juwetl) - The research lab in your pocket: apps and the academy, 2011
- **The Telegraph** (bit.ly/1GNQFyi) - University education goes online with virtual courses, 2011
- **BBC News** - Photography and education, 2012 (bbc.in/1RS4NeS)
- **Creative Commons** (bit.ly/1f0Effu) - Interview: Jonathan Worth's Connected Classroom, 2012

In addition to these resources the class tutors have established and actively maintained/curated an active social media (especially twitter) network around the classes. This enables lively conversations surrounding their “learning objects” - the interviews, podcasts, lectures, tasks and task-responses. These conversations together with the visitor stats/analytics for the class site – indicate high levels of Coventry student and external visitor participation. 

COMC Final Report, 2012
In 2013 the PhonarEd project was recognised for outstanding innovation in the International Reclaim Open Learning Challenge (open.media.mit.edu/) and Symposium (bit.ly/1IUUxhe). This award presented an opportunity for the team to highlight their achievements and articulate the impact.

Since 2009 the classes have been variously remixed and re-written. The last ten-week iteration of phonar had over seventy people with editing rights on the schedule representing over 45 different Universities and the last iteration of Picbod was adopted, adapted and run independently by Matt Johnston applying his successes at turning [online] numbers into names and actions (with the photobookclub.org). The last iteration of Phonar had over 35,000 people come to the WordPress version of the class from 139 countries, we haven’t had resources to accurately record the Flickr, Soundcloud, Youtube, Google+ and Twitter environments though the classes thrive there also. Following Phonar2012 the students demanded their next class be run open and along the same lines – which Coventry University assented to – our proviso being that they (the students) designed it. Phonar2012 graduated with the highest percentage of First Class Honours in the history of the course Reclaim Open Learning Challenge, 2013 Reclaim Open Learning Challenge, 2013 (bit.ly/1R4bi3m)

There has been a positive impact on the standing of the Media Department within the University and the wider HE arena, having moved up 52 places in the Guardian League tables during the last four years. This reflects the success of the open classes and the wide scale interest in these approaches by the international community. The University recently funded a large-scale initiative to develop the Disruptive Media Learning Lab, which includes both a
large and innovative physical space and a financial contribution to research and develop the experimentation with disruptive technologies and approaches to teaching within much the same ethos as the open classes. The new ‘open’ Photography MA was approved quickly and was described as the ‘most interesting proposal seen in a long time’ which reflects an acceptance at institutional level of the approaches developed by the Department.

In addition to this are the impacts on the people involved in the open classes. Although the classes were initially the result of several individuals bringing different skills, ideas and approaches there is now a loose ‘team’ of people who have reached a sophisticated understanding of open practice. One of the challenges for managers is to reflect on all the individual contributions and find ways to retain the innovative approaches whilst integrating it into everyday team practice. Whilst involved in the open classes the staff have continued to develop their own open media practices and their open educational practice. Several staff involved in the open classes have increased their own professional profile - through increased publishing opportunities, interviews, presentations and recognition from the wider community. For example, Jonathan Worth was invited to become a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts, has won an HEA national teaching fellowship and was also invited to comment when the European Parliament was discussing a change in copyright legislation. Matt Johnston has begun a PhD, secured a lectureship and has presented his own innovations – such as the Photobook Club at international events. Shaun Hides, Jonathan Shaw and Jonathan Worth have all secured key roles in the DMLL initiative. Pete Woodbridge devised and became leader of a new course BA Digital Media – which embodied many tenets of openness from the outset. These staff have become champions for the Department and the Institution although this has not been done in a managed way and not all of the publicity is highly branded as being from, or about, Coventry University. Individual staff members appear to maintain a high personal profile and have their own blogs which provide multiple channels to disseminate the open classes. This can, however, make it difficult to find information about the open classes if you are unaware of all the people involved.

As described earlier, trust has been an important aspect as individuals across the Department have worked together to create a community of open practice. The importance of this and the authenticity to those participating in this community is highlighted as being important for ongoing trust and participation.

That’s about us building that network, building that community, building that trust, if the things that we say in these spaces prove to be unreliable, not interesting, not challenging, ‘off the money’, then people simply won’t trust us, and they won’t stay in our networks.

Shaun Hides, 2013 Jisc on Air Radio recording - Delivering Free online courses - how open can we be? (bit.ly/1LUAlit)

Establishing and building on this trust was a challenge for Department mangers as there have been differing levels of staff engagement as the courses developed.
All were engaged, but this ranged from a profound and sophisticated engagement, to a tentative and testing approach. This was mostly evident in terms of their attachment to different mixes of media / platforms and therefore, how, and how intensely, they were ‘Open, and Actively Open’ (our distinction between simply making resources available online and making it possible to engage with the class through activities and/or dialogue or interaction). Further, staff engagement was predictably affected by the depth of experience they had with this approach. COMC Final Report, 2012

Because staff might be at different points of the adoption curve it can be difficult to share information and to mentor and support one another. Some other Media Department staff have also begun with more sceptical/ critical stances with respect to “open”, but it is important to acknowledge that this is as likely to be engendered by their critique of the economics of online environments as it is out of any adherence to established pedagogies. This is where external funding can be helpful, as it may allow for more time for evaluation and reflection. There is evidence of strong mentoring between the teachers involved in the open classes, but also the open networked approach has supported wide scale mentoring opportunities from outside the Department. This external mentoring allowed for cross discipline exchange and supported continued innovation. A good example of this is the connection made between the US open class Digital Storytelling DS106 (ds106.us) and the Phonar/Picbod classes which have similarities in philosophy and approach. This lead to shared activities and an ongoing relationship to inform future work. Both initiatives were recognised in the Reclaim Open Learning Challenge (bit.ly/1U7J4DS).

There are increasing tensions for all HE institutions as external mechanisms such as RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) do not encourage collaboration and co-operation between or within Departments and the increasing Marketisation agenda could impact on cross institutional collaboration (Curran, 2000). These overarching values can be challenging as the notion of competition does not sit easily with open collaborative approaches.

One of the challenges for staff trying to innovate and change their teaching approaches is that they don’t know in advance what the value and benefits are - they may have a vision for what they want to achieve but it is not easy to articulate this in a way that will satisfy institutional managers who want to know what the outcomes will be in five years time. Adopting a more agile approach is challenging but also likely to be quite exciting as they discover the outcomes. This also highlights another challenge for the Department, because once these approaches are formalised they may become less interesting for staff who enjoy working in a more experimental way.
Registered students

The students have been very engaged with each of these classes – it is difficult to quantify precisely, because numerous factors inform students perception of the value of any one class (most are subjective and all are experiential factors, which are necessarily affected by complex and multiple factors). Nonetheless, it is safe to say that these classes enjoyed some of the best module evaluations of the year and also produced some of the most interesting and exciting student work. For many students and more so in specific classes, there was little sense they were participating in an “Open Class”. Students were informed, but this ethos had relatively little value to them, what mattered was the quality and richness of the experience our approach enabled. In one case there was some anxiety over resistance to the Open Class approach.

COMC Final Report, 2012

UKOER Programme evidence showed that many students initially struggle with notions of open practice (oersynth.pbworks.com/w/page/64076615/HEFCE-Review-Impact#ImpactonStakeholdersandtheirrelation) in relation to their courses, both in relation to making content they perceive they have ‘paid for’ available to others but also in sharing their own work created as part of the learning process. This requires a change in mindset around what exactly students are paying for and the development of a more sophisticated understanding by staff of student expectations and how they might expand these expectations beyond the notion of being fed content developed by experts.

However, in this class (Creative Activism) some Coventry students expressed concerns about external participants having access to the class. Their initial perception being that for ‘normal’ fee paying students – their “Paid for” and “Open access” shouldn’t go together, also that their work should not be “given away”. This was somewhat ironic given the value they also attached to the input of external contributors – who were not paid. These perceptions did shift through the class. It is notable that some of the same students were also not happy about the Activist stance of the module – there was clearly some difference of expectation about what their film-making direction should be and the teams view that it should be informed by diverse experiences.

COMC Final Report, 2012

For the Department of Media at Coventry one of the key drivers of their work is in responding to the changing needs of media professions and ensuring that their courses reflect these. There is no question that the open media classes have offered students opportunities to consider these issues and to begin to develop their own professional identities and to start operating as media professionals in a global networked community. There are some extraordinary examples of how this overall approach led to individual students being offered opportunities that have launched them into exciting career paths, such as Joanna Ornowska whose work appeared on the cover of The British Journal of Photography, Marta Kochanek (bbc.in/1LD1CYP) who secured an internship with New York photographer Annie Leibovitz and Oliver Sharpe who was spotted by DuckRabbit Productions (duckrabbit.info). Not all students are going to have such immediate and dramatic opportunities but student blogs reveal an awareness of themselves as a twenty first century practitioner, make their work visible and identify the open classes as being instrumental in raising their awareness of this.
A good indicator of the impact of the open classes is the way that students have taken control of some activities and have been given the space, encouragement and support to generate new activities. This reveals a level of sophistication in student understanding of the media as they identify some of the possibilities made possible by the open networked approach and take advantage of this to be creative and proactive.
Many of the final reflections and work produced during open classes contained some highly personal accounts which illustrate a high level of trust and confidence in expressing themselves in a completely open space.

Approaching Phonar I had the ideology that the photograph was the same as the image, digital photography and video were completely separate mediums and the key issues involved with photography didn’t stretch much more than the limitations of commerce and commercial manipulation. However after being introduced to practitioners such as Fred Ritchin, Stephen Mayes, David Campbell and Shahidul along with many other contributors, I have been able to identify and reflect on the key issues associated with post-modern photography following the paradigm shift from analogue to digital.

Rebecca Woodall - final reflection
(bit.ly/1LHJa28)

Over the last couple of years of the course, we have been told again and again about the importance of online networking through social media, websites and other forms of communication. Whilst I understood the importance of this, something which I didn’t understand as fully was the importance of building up a trust with these connections. This is something which I feel #phonar has allowed me to understand and develop in order to maximise the credibility of my online presence.

Oliver Wood - final reflection
(bit.ly/1NwlL6d)

My time on the photography course made me see my world and understand the way I learn, and perhaps how much of the population learns. It also taught me to believe in myself. I am dyslexic, and through my time in education it has been a battle. At Coventry University they helped me understand that dyslexia can be a positive attribute in this multimedia world that is being created by us around us. I learnt that reading and writing weren’t the only way to communicate and that visual language, audio and limited writing can for many people be an even better way of communicating.

They taught me how to use images, sounds and video to tell a story. I might not be able to write a sentence or even read it, but I can communicate powerfully through the visual language. I have used sound, images and videos to document issues of personal interest to me and to help others understand better.

Larissa Grace, student

In fact some students shared incredibly powerful stories from their personal lives as part of the creative process that seemed to provide a cathartic experience to share traumatic experiences so openly. This was not anticipated but has occurred more than once during the open classes and raises interesting questions around why students might choose to do this and how to respond.

The open community connected to the class responded in a highly sensitive and supportive way, emphasising the levels of trust that can be built in such a diverse globally distributed community. Yet in another class there were strong reactions against sharing on an open platform so the teacher responded by providing a closed forum to facilitate discussion.
As discussed earlier, an important part of the open classes is the notion of improving digital and media literacies. The nature of the classes develops digital storytelling capacity and helps them understand the notion of a digital professional identity, both important elements of digital literacy. Whilst visual and media literacies relate specifically to the course curricula these literacies are also relevant to other subjects and the open classes offer interesting exemplars that could be adopted for other subject disciplines.

There are also many issues around engagement of students with the open platform approach not just in terms of their digital literacy skills (fluency) - when digital literacy was not the focus of the class' activities - but also their awareness of the changing Media and HE landscape, their attachment to old models of both, their resistance to collaborative learning.

COMC Final Report, 2012

The links to professional practice highlight the changing business models of the media industry with freelance models dominating and 60% of graduates go straight into employment. By the second year of Media undergraduate degrees students are often already established as freelance businesses. Student applications to the photography course have significantly increased and the course is noted as the ‘hardest course to get onto’, although some of this is the result of wider constraints such as institutional limitations on student numbers, room size, etc.

Our experience is that students in the Media Department at Coventry benefit enormously from this manner of ‘Open’ working—which is partly how we justify it to the university. For example, students gain access to a vastly expanded range of resources; they have been given feedback and commentary by scholars and practitioners from all over the world; while the exposure of and commentary on, their practical work has led to opportunities for projects, placements, and opportunities at levels beyond any previously available.

van Mourik Broekman et al, Open education: a study in disruption, 2014
Online participants

However, and importantly, it is not just students at Coventry who benefit in our own particular hybrid take on ‘blended learning’ classes on these courses are open online to anyone, anywhere, to participate in, add to the discussions and even rip, remix and mash-up. This applies to the schedule, lectures, lesson contents, exercises and assignments, recommended reading, recorded talks and interviews with visiting speakers (audio and video), RSS feeds, tag clouds and blog post archive, as well as a number of practical ‘how-to’ videos, all of which are available under a CC-BY-SA license. The use of blogs, Vimeo, Flickr, Twitter and other social media platforms means that participants—both the in-class (‘atoms based’), accredited, fee-paying participants and those taking these open classes for free remotely—can interact and contribute through discussion, feedback, suggestions, etc. In this way the syllabus thus becomes a ‘coauthored script’, curated by the academic team but produced by the collective exchange and effort of the learning community.

van Mourik Broekman et al, Open education: a study in disruption, 2014

It is harder to generalise about the impact of the open classes on the online participants, which can comprise high level professional media practitioners, enthusiastic amateurs, students from other courses, potential Coventry students, Coventry alumni, educational practitioners or the general public from anywhere in the world. The fact that there are so many open participants, and that they keep coming back indicates significant buy-in to the open classes. Their participation is clearly evident from the hashtag use on social media sites such as twitter, flickr, vimeo and youtube, connections made in google plus and linked-in, blog posts and content produced in response to weekly tasks. The benefits of engaging in the open classes are slightly different for different groups but many of them demonstrate an interest and commitment to the concept of open practice. The open classes present new virtual spaces for participants to expand their professional networks, distribute their creative content and take advantage of new and different professional opportunities.

I had a hit list of people who are changing the world of photography and I rang them up and went to see them. They were interested because of the nature of the project, because of the other people in the group, and got very excited. Again I was putting a community together, one of passionate and committed people.

Jonathan Worth, 2011 (bit.ly/1HuvRjO)

Utilising external contributions means that the open classes are never static, as the direction of conversations and contributions can be steered by the participants themselves. Links to other open classes such as DS106 (ds106.us) means that participants might mix and match activities across classes and some content could have tags that are relevant to two different classes (bit.ly/1HwZ130). This results in highly fluid and diverse content and always leaves room for surprises and serendipity for both registered students, staff and open participants.

One challenge for the Department is how far they decide to manage or support activity outside scheduled classes. Open participants can come to class activities at any time or could continue to use the hashtags as appropriate but this is challenging for staff who may be devoting energies to other more traditional classes.

Findings and outcomes

I had a hit list of people who are changing the world of photography and I rang them up and went to see them. They were interested because of the nature of the project, because of the other people in the group, and got very excited. Again I was putting a community together, one of passionate and committed people.
There have been several spin-off activities that are not badged as Coventry University activities but it may not always be clear to people how far they are linked to Coventry staff. So for example the Phonar Nation (phonarnation.org/) (Jonathan Worth) youth photography class and the Photobook club (photobookclub.org/) (Matt Johnston) are not badged as Coventry University activities. It is likely that there will be overlap for online participants who may get involved in supporting or participating on these kinds of linked activities.

**Other educators**

As part of the UKOER COMC (bit.ly/1Huz8ia) project the Department attempted to engage some colleges in the open classes, but this surfaced several challenges for this type of educational institution (see right).

There was also a nervousness within colleges about using social media networks and no culture of using such networks to collaborate. Given the strictures of the current national curriculum and the increasing pressure on achievement of results in a narrowing list of subjects for league-table purposes, this reticence is not surprising. This finding was reflected by other UKOER projects and highlighted challenges around institutional use and control of technologies, traditional cultures of ‘broadcast’ teaching and more centrally controlled teaching institutions.

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**External collaborators outside HE, with little or no experience of OER have been extremely difficult to engage with. The least successful aspect of the project has been our attempt to engage with local colleges. We have made bridgeheads with a small number of Phoenix Partner Colleges – especially Finham Park School and Calunden Castle School, but this has required high levels of F2F commitment and (almost) bribery! Beyond accessing the individual class contents – which after the meeting to set the contact up is almost impossible to identify – there has been almost no active participation in the classes. Team members visited the Colleges, walked-through the class sites discussed potential uses, emphasised the open and free nature of the content, resources and networks. The only ‘cost’ to these participant for enhanced access to the classes and additional support was that they put some comments on the classes and especially the core COMC project pages. In the event none did so. This experience highlights the barrier that exists on our part on the transition from ‘broadcasting’ modes and on the part of potential external participants if they arrive at the class after its development.**

COMC Final Report, 2012

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Responses to the classes from the HE sector have generally been very positive and some academic staff are considering how they might adapt or adopt some of the approaches used in the open classes. Simon Lancaster is professor of chemical education at the University of East Anglia (EUA) and a national teaching fellow who has been inspired by the open class approach. Simon has authored open educational resources (chemistryvignette.net) and contributes to EUA MOOCs but is well aware of the challenges of making elements of traditional courses truly open. He has adopted the hashtag approach (#phonarchem bit.ly/1HwYwpC) to encourage people to celebrate everyday chemistry using photographs.

Although Chemistry is a very different discipline it is refreshing to see that some of the open class approaches may be transferable to other subject areas. This is particularly pertinent if we consider that all subjects have stories to tell and can make effective use of open social media to do so. The links with the US Digital Storytelling course (DS106) has already been noted and there are some interesting affinities between the two:

» originally traditional campus based courses that benefitted from being made open in quite revolutionary ways

» developed trusted committed open communities and even have members that straddle both

» provide exciting alternatives to the MOOC models that currently exist

» emphasise creativity and artistic devices to tell stories

» have charismatic, high profile people leading and driving developments who already may have links to other innovators and networks of proactive people in their field

» elicit sometimes passionate and reverential responses in other educators who admire the innovative, almost anarchic approaches

» encourage ownership by all participants and allow directions to be changed

» committed to open licences that enable and actively encourage reuse and repurposing

» recognised by the Reclaim Open Learning Challenge (open.media.mit.edu)

» use aggregated wordpress sites as hubs to aggregate content using hashtags

» see online elements of the classes as an augmentation or enhancement of physical aspects, not a replacement

Phonar was an immediate inspiration to me. Chemistry is a highly visual subject and every chemical reaction a story. #phonarchem is our attempt to celebrate chemistry and recreate something of the #phonar community.”

Prof Simon Lancaster, Interview, January 2015

Findings and outcomes

Open media classes at Coventry University

Pronunciation: "phonarchem"
4.6 How transferable are the models to other institutional contexts and subject disciplines?

It is important to note that the models used in the open classes are not definitive and that there is no ONE model. Each class was adapted as appropriate to the course content, student needs and changing needs of open media professional education. These developments have led to new UG and MA courses which reflect the lessons learned by the team as they developed and adapted the Open media Classes. Coventry are working to examine how these models can transfer to other departments and courses. Other institutions and individuals are also currently taking some of the models and applying them in different contexts.

For the team at Coventry these open models are not aiming to become the ‘norm’ but are part of an ongoing investigation into how higher education might respond to continuing political, economic and social changes and challenges. Whilst others could adopt elements of these models they have not been presented to the wider community as a single solution - they have been as much a part of the process and not simply a product.

When staff from the Department go out and talk about the open classes the responses from the HE sector are interesting as individuals find the approaches compelling but the barriers to adopting these approaches at their own institutions quickly emerge. Barriers around the problems of changing cultures within different kinds of institutions, across different subject disciplines and lack of institutional commitment are often cited and reflect findings from the UKOER Programme (bit.ly/1KsmNx8).

Although the open classes have now led to the development of open courses at Coventry, they were developed incrementally, allowing the staff and students time to adjust and they were part of a traditional campus based validated course. The impressive outcomes and widescale mainstream press interest can be a powerful indicator to Institutional managers of the benefits to both students, staff and the Institution. Although Coventry initially had supportive senior managers, they have still had to continue working hard to convince other staff in the institution that these approaches have made an impact and are sustainable. This approach would allow other institutions to take similar small steps to openness. By linking open class approaches to developing digital literacies, a wide range of subject disciplines could adopt these approaches. All professions need people who can articulate their stories through digital media - this applies to all disciplines and can be seen as an important element of professional development. This presents opportunities for staff in a range of subject disciplines to try some of these approaches.

PhonarEd (bit.ly/1NvJ63L) was developed by Jonathan Worth in response to conversations with other educators where he discovered that people felt they were copying or cheating in some way if they adopted his approaches. In effect he wanted to move from being ‘passively open’ to ‘actively’ open by providing a back channel using the hashtag #PhonarEd for instructors to come together, share experiences and highlight examples of best (open) visual story-telling practice. This is an attempt to empower and enable other educators and is further evidence of the generosity and dedication to open collaboration.

As such our first step in this evolution of the project is to syndicate #phonar2013 and #PhonarEd with World Photo Org to its 68,000 photographers and 250 universities. Hopefully PhonarEd means syndication turns to collaboration on a grand scale and we can move beyond photo education to digital and visual literacy, and then Applied Learning - in terms of [visual] journalism this will be game changing, it is Education as agent for change.

Reclaim Open Learning, September 2013
There is no doubt that the open media classes have contributed to a shift in standing for the Media Department at Coventry University, having moved up 52 places in the Guardian League tables during the last four years. There is also clear evidence that there have been very positive outcomes for the diverse groups and individuals who have led and contributed to the open classes. The open classes have informed the re-approval of the Photography Bachelor of Arts Degree course, a new BA in Digital Media and an open Masters course (launching September 2015). This is a remarkable illustration of how far the experiences of the department, academic staff and registered and open students have convinced institutional managers of the scalability of the model/s. The development of the Disruptive Media Lab in 2013 provides tangible evidence that the University endorses the activities of the Department, which has been given an entire floor of the Library and significant funding investment over three years to develop the Lab which will focus on - openness (research and teaching), co-creation and game based approaches, the flipped classroom and online/distance learning.

The open media classes were not developed in a vacuum. They were, and are, an integral part of a range of activities at Coventry, including the Research activities at the Centre for Disruptive Media, and the series of open access and editable publications by Professor Gary Hall, the development of bespoke mobile applications, as well as collaborative activities with other art schools to explore the concept of a ‘21st Century Art School’. These activities are symbiotic and help to generate and support a culture of openness and innovation. The team at Coventry make it clear that course development is an ongoing process that is continually responding to needs as they develop. As new people join the team with different experiences and practices, the courses may be taken in new directions, although the fundamental principles remain the same. The principles outlined in the policy developed by Shaun Hides in 2009 - Tactical, Sustainable, Engaged, Visible and Collaborative - continue to frame the changes the team make in their efforts to respond to what it means to be a media professional and in how the Department provides a curriculum to support this.

Issues of trust and risk have been key factors in the overall story of the open media classes. Department managers, in particular placed significant trust in innovative lecturers to try out new approaches, and those lecturers in turn trusted managers to navigate the institution on their behalf in terms of risk management. There was also a need for trust in opening the classes to outside contributors in terms of ensuring that students had positive learning experiences, received valid and useful interaction and feedback and developed the confidence to interact in an open way. The risk of placing students in situations where they may feel vulnerable needed to be managed well and the lecturers did respond to concerns from students and established a more secure forum in one instance. The low profile approach adopted by the Department of Media meant that the Institution did not become overly risk averse, which enabled innovation to take place, but there is also clear evidence of a level of trust at the institutional level as senior managers supported early steps into open access and open podcasting.

It is also important to note that for the team at Coventry these open models are not aiming to become the ‘norm’ but are part of an ongoing investigation into how HE might respond to continuing political, economic and social changes and challenges. These challenges also present opportunities to reconsider traditional approaches and explore new ways to educate and support learners. Whilst other educational institutions could adopt elements of these models they have not been presented to the wider community as a single solution - for Coventry University they have been as much a part of the process and not simply a product. (see quote on next page)

Throughout this report we have used the terms ‘innovation’ and ‘disruption’. These terms can be perceived and dismissed as ‘buzzwords’ but for the Department the terms fundamentally drive their thinking and their activities. A thorough discussion of why the Department
focuses on ‘disruption’ is well articulated in a recent publication ‘Open Education: a study in disruption’ (bit.ly/1tI3XEV). The open media classes are exemplars of innovative teaching practice which take advantage of open social technologies but which are situated within validated, formal University courses. These classes illustrate exciting new approaches that have the potential to transform both the relationships between teachers and learners and the roles of academics, students, industry professionals and the public in education. A recent article by Jim Groom and Brian Lamb on ‘reclaiming innovation’ offers a considered discussion around these terms saying that innovation is ‘increasingly conflated with hype, disruption for disruption’s sake, and outsourcing laced with a dose of austerity-driven down sizing. Call it innovation fatigue’ (Groom and Lamb 2014). They consider the values, goals and strategies that educators might pursue to keep innovation as a ‘positive force’ and call for ‘open architectures, through open-source applications, to reinvest in creative people, processes, and possibilities’. The open media classes at Coventry illustrate these values and offer authentic exemplars of innovation.

Since 2009 the classes have been variously remixed and re-written. The last ten week iteration of phonar had over seventy people with editing rights on the schedule representing over 45 different Universities and the last iteration of Picbod was adopted, adapted and run independently by Matt Johnston applying his successes at turning [online] numbers into names and actions (with the photobookclub.org). The last iteration of Phonar had over 35,000 people come to the WordPress version of the class from 139 countries, we haven't had resources to accurately record the flickr, Soundcloud, Youtube, Google+ and Twitter environments though the classes thrive there also. Following Phonar2012 the students demanded their next class be run open and along the same lines – which Coventry University assented to – our proviso being that they (the students) designed it Phonar2012 graduated with the highest percentage of First Class Honours in the history of the course.

Reclaim Open Learning Awards, 2013 (bit.ly/1R4bi3m)

We have proven to our institution that by opening up our photography classes we create a network of connected visual storytellers who serve to enrich the experience of the paying and attending student (leading to our course becoming the most over subscribed in the University). This virtuous circle of the distributed class has enabled engagement by individuals and communities barred from traditional closed learning either by geographical, financial or cultural barriers, whilst simultaneously offering an expanded network of resource and collaboration to the attendee. As far as we can see - everyone wins.

Reclaim Open Learning Awards, 2013 (bit.ly/1R4bi3m)

It is well within the power of educators to play a decisive role in the battle for the future of the web. Doing so will require the courage to buck prevailing trends. It will require an at-times inconvenient commitment to the fundamental principles of openness, ownership, and participation. It will require hard work, creativity, and a spint of fun.

Groom, J AND Lamb, b. 2014 \ (bit.ly/1ksK2Lb)
6. Recommendations

For Coventry
1. Consider how to embrace the multiple narratives that develop from the student experiences and that of academics, and external contributors - positive and negative - time is needed to reflect on the different implications.

2. One of the challenges for managers is to reflect on individual contributions of staff and find ways to retain the innovative approaches whilst integrating it into everyday team practice - it may be difficult to maintain a balance between individual creativity and team culture although both will be needed to continue moving forward. This is now an issue for the whole University as the establishment of the Disruptive Media Learning Lab signals a commitment to enable people across the University to utilise open participative approaches - enabling people is a very different set of activities to actually doing it yourself.

3. It has been quite difficult at times to source information about the various classes during this study. Whilst this may have been due to the unavoidable need to take down some of the class websites due to security problems, it does raise an issue about how the Department tells its story to the wider HE community. Although the disruptivemedia.org.uk site does link out to some of the open classes it assumes a level of knowledge that not all users may have, and does not link to all classes (e.g. the cine collective bit.ly/1fgIO6W). The site does not actually show a relationship to Coventry University. The COMC (bit.ly/IS2ezLH) link is a project link so does not offer the story before or after the Jisc funded period. It may be of value to establish one place to tell the story of the open classes. For example, many of the articles or posts speak about phonar and concentrate on the photography classes but it is of value to show how these approaches are relevant to other subject areas, even within the media professions. Adopting a hashtag approach to this may be possible using the various class hashtags.

4. Consider further how far the Department maintains the archive of class content and how far they support activity that might occur outside official class timescales. Automated aggregation mechanisms can do this to a certain extent but there is still a need to ensure that the virtual space remains a safe place to be. Does the open community police itself in this regard or is there an onus on the Department to do this?

5. Consider if there is an optimum number of students in a class for the open element to work. In the past low class numbers of 9-12 students meant that opening the course expanded the number of conversations and range of people involved. Now that classes could include as many as 40 students the group dynamics are likely to change and the open classes may work differently.

6. Consider how far the content developed during open classes can be reused, either by the department or by those outside the University. There are questions about the return on investment that are interesting to department managers, so for example does the extra time needed to provide open classes decrease as the open content is developed or does new content have to be developed at the same rate. Although much of the content in generated by students and external contributors, significant content is still produced by the lecturers to keep classes fresh.

7. Is there potential for research into how far the secondary education system enables students to take advantage of open networked approaches or do they need to be de-schooled/re-educated (at the moment these approaches work with second and third year students who have already established a level of trust).

8. Jisc funding allowed the Department to devote extra time to the classes. Would conventional classes have benefitted in similar ways if extra staffing had been available?
9. Several members of the department have identified a value in linking the open networked spaces and activities to physical spaces. This presents a very rich area for ongoing research.

For other HE Institutions
1. Need for institutional openness to change and new approaches - innovation needs space to experiment and acceptance that some failure may occur
2. Taking an adaptable approach to managing small scale risk
3. Innovations that are not branded as high profile institutional activities (such as the recent MOOC activities) are less likely to induce risk averse responses and allow for more innovation
4. Consider how far these kinds of approaches could be adopted with other subject areas
5. Take advantage of new relationships with other educational institutions both nationally and internationally
6. Use these kinds of distributed networking approaches to develop and maintain important relationships with external partners and broaden opportunities to engage with new partners and develop new kinds of relationships with industry
7. Although these approaches seem to be highly appropriate for media departments, the fact that they have had to fight so hard to be recognised as ‘serious’ academic subjects means that disruptive and experimental approaches may not seem to be viable. Ignoring these kinds of approaches, however, could lead to media departments not reflecting the educational needs of future media professionals

For Jisc
1. Funding for short term projects can have a significant impact where individuals or departments have begun innovating but need extra resourcing to consolidate action research - particularly in allowing time for evaluation, extra staffing and technical developments
2. Jisc needs to make more of the work it has supported and documented in the past, which is often on or beyond the edge of what is considered current practice. These need to be easier for institutions to find, and presented in such a way that those interested can learn from it. (Many links to Jisc content about the Coventry open media classes are no longer working despite this work being of very high value to the wider community)

For innovators (academics, educational tech, individuals, departments)
1. Take advantage of support from similar innovators working in related areas - it leads to shared experiences, activities and dissemination opportunities
## Evaluation questions for different stakeholder groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Theory Triangle</th>
<th>Community: social context; all actors involved in the activity system</th>
<th>Tools: the artefacts (or concepts) used by actors in the system</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Object - open media courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject - all stakeholders</td>
<td>how this impacts on various stakeholders</td>
<td>the model/approach</td>
<td>institutional aspects</td>
<td>changing roles - skill aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does Coventry University want to know?</td>
<td>» Has this enabled open students to experience Cov Uni learning and teaching?</td>
<td>» Do the approaches adopted fit with Institutional technologies?</td>
<td>» Does this cost more or less?</td>
<td>» How does this approach impact on academic staff?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>» Have open learners joined Cov Uni in other capacities (as paying customers) after engaging through open opportunities?</td>
<td>» Is the model sustainable in terms of support during and after courses?</td>
<td>» How does this approach impact on the University brand?</td>
<td>» What are the practical implications of this approach on support service teams?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Has this increased student enrolment?</td>
<td>» Would the model be transferable to other Cov Uni courses?</td>
<td>» Does this approach require changes to strategy or policy?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Has this improved the student experience?</td>
<td>» Has this model enhanced the institution's reputation?</td>
<td>» Which Institutional strategies does this fit with - L and T, assessment, innovation, widening participation, IT, etc.?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>» Has this increased student retention?</td>
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<td>» Are there any issues around ownership and copyright?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>» How do paying students respond to working with open learners?</td>
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<td>» What links can we make with other ed institutions?</td>
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<td>» What is the nature of new partnerships and how does this impact on the institution?</td>
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**Object - open media courses**

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**Subject - all stakeholders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does the Course team want to know?</th>
<th>How is archiving, signposting and accessibility going to be dealt with?</th>
<th>How does this fit with course validation and quality mechanisms?</th>
<th>How has this improved and extended our professional practice?</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>» Has this lowered the entry threshold to the HE experience without cost or other barriers? (taken from COMC project plan)</td>
<td>» Do different subjects merit different approaches</td>
<td>» Has this led to new pedagogical approaches? (From Broadcast to collaborative content development and curation)</td>
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<td>» Were all staff and stakeholders committed to this open approach?</td>
<td>» Has what we have learnt changed out pedagogical approaches?</td>
<td>» Has engaging external partners changed or informed practice development of the team?</td>
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<tr>
<td>» Has this offered new possibilities of personal/ open/ collective learning and encourage the formation of independent online learning communities? (taken from COMC project plan)</td>
<td>» How far can we take this model for different subject areas? (developed iteratively - so still in development)</td>
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<td>» Did students understand and engage with the open content and open approach?</td>
<td>» What are the legacy issues around maintaining active vibrant community spaces once courses have finished?</td>
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<td>» Has this enhanced student participation and contributions?</td>
<td>» How has this led to additional opportunities for networking or professional development?</td>
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<td>» Have students developed stronger digital literacies, particularly around online presence and professional visibility?</td>
<td>» Has this led to new ways of incorporating external people into learning and teaching?</td>
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<td>» Has this led to additional opportunities for networking or professional development?</td>
<td>» Are these new partnerships sustainable?</td>
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### Object - open media courses

- how this impacts on various stakeholders
- the model/approach
- institutional aspects
- changing roles - skill aspects

### Subject - all stakeholders

- what do Jisc want to know?

  - How do we overcome an inherent fear of new open models?
  - What are the best methods to tell this story to different stakeholders?
  - How do we convince others that the benefits outweigh the barriers?
  - How far are the wider community prepared to challenge existing accepted practice and culture?
  - How can this model be adopted or adapted for other UK HE or FE institutions?
  - This model relies on use of open social technologies yet many FE institutions restrict these (for various reasons). How do we challenge these restrictions or enable this different model?
  - Is this model still possible to some extent even within these limitations?
  - What are the practical implications for institutions that are interested in adopting this model?
  - What have been the barriers to open academic practice?
  - What are the legal aspects of this model?
  - What changes in academic practice are needed?
  - How can Jisc support change in practice to incorporate openness?
  - How do we enable open academic practices?

### What does the wider community want to know?

  - How does this link or relate to other open educational models?
  - How do learners perceive open courses?
  - How do registered paying students respond to working with open learners?
  - Are students digital literacies really good enough to take advantage of this kind of model?
  - Can these courses enhance student’s professional use of digital media?
  - Are there any ‘quick wins’ - small adaptations that can have a big impact?
  - What are the practical aspects of adopting this kind of model? (so time allocation differences, responding to open multi-time zone students and wider contributors, etc.)
  - What impact has this had on professionals in the field?
  - What do academic practitioners need to change in order to adopt this approach?
### Activity Theory Triangle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community: social context; all actors involved in the activity system</th>
<th>Tools: the artefacts (or concepts) used by actors in the system</th>
<th>Rules: conventions, guidelines and rules regulating activities in the system</th>
<th>Roles (division of labour): social strata, hierarchical structure of activity, the division of activities among actors in the system</th>
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### Object - open media courses

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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>how this impacts on various stakeholders</td>
<td>the model/approach</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Subject - all stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do other educational institutions want to know?</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does this improve the student experience?</td>
<td>How does this model differ from xMOOC offerings?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does it enhance retention, progression, etc…?</td>
<td>What are the benefits - why should we do this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it attract new students to the institution?</td>
<td>How does the costing model differ from traditional course provision?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What are the cost implications?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Effective Actively Open classes are social interactions, which do not respect the schedule/costing models of conventional classes within HE)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does the resourcing differ? more time upfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there any funding to help us do this?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What would need to change operationally?</td>
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</table>

### What do other academic practitioners want to know?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do I engage my students in these new technologies?</td>
<td>Are my subject area and teaching traditions able to be adapted to an open approach?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I make contact with professionals in the field? How do I convince them to contribute to my course?</td>
<td>Does this take more time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I open the course to open students?</td>
<td>How do I convince my department, faculty, institution to let me try this model or aspects of it?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which institutional services might I need to involve?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Which technologies work best for collaborative creation and collation of content?</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do I convince my students that this approach has value?</td>
<td>How do I convince my students that this approach has value?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I need to change my approaches to assessment?</td>
<td>Do I need to change my approaches to assessment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will my institution support me if I want to try this?</td>
<td>Will my institution support me if I want to try this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I brand the course?</td>
<td>How do I brand the course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I need to ‘police’ the open students?</td>
<td>Can I tie this in with existing institutional priorities and strategies?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How will my role change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do I need new skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will my existing skills still be valued?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

References and sources
This report is also available as a series of mobile friendly web pages at comc.loumcgill.co.uk

Coventry University sources
1. COMC website - bit.ly/1Huz8ia
2. COMC Final report - bit.ly/1U8pMOX
3. The Centre of Disruptive Media - bit.ly/1gbKRRQ

Jisc sources
1. Radio transcript Delivering free online courses - bit.ly/1LUAlit
2. Opening up practice and resources: Are we nearly there? Jisc Online Conference November 2012 Professor Allison Littlejohn, Dr Shaun Hides and Jonathan Worth bit.ly/1f1mjl0 View the recording (bit.ly/1BYI0MC) Download .pdf of presentation (bit.ly/1GOcsFU)
3. Jisc case study online - bit.ly/1Nx6VHZ
4. COMC evaluation wiki - bit.ly/1KqL4nH
5. UKOER synthesis and evaluation wiki - /bit.ly/oerevalsynth
6. OER infoKit - bit.ly/oerinfoKit

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1. bit.ly/1LJ2Xly Jan 2011
2. bit.ly/1Nx7b9V
3. bit.ly/1Nw1REI Jan 2014
4. bit.ly/1fkKpWq webinar March 2014 bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-20495489
Research papers/chapters/Books


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