

## **BYOD4L – Our Open Magical Box to Enhance Individuals' Learning Ecologies**

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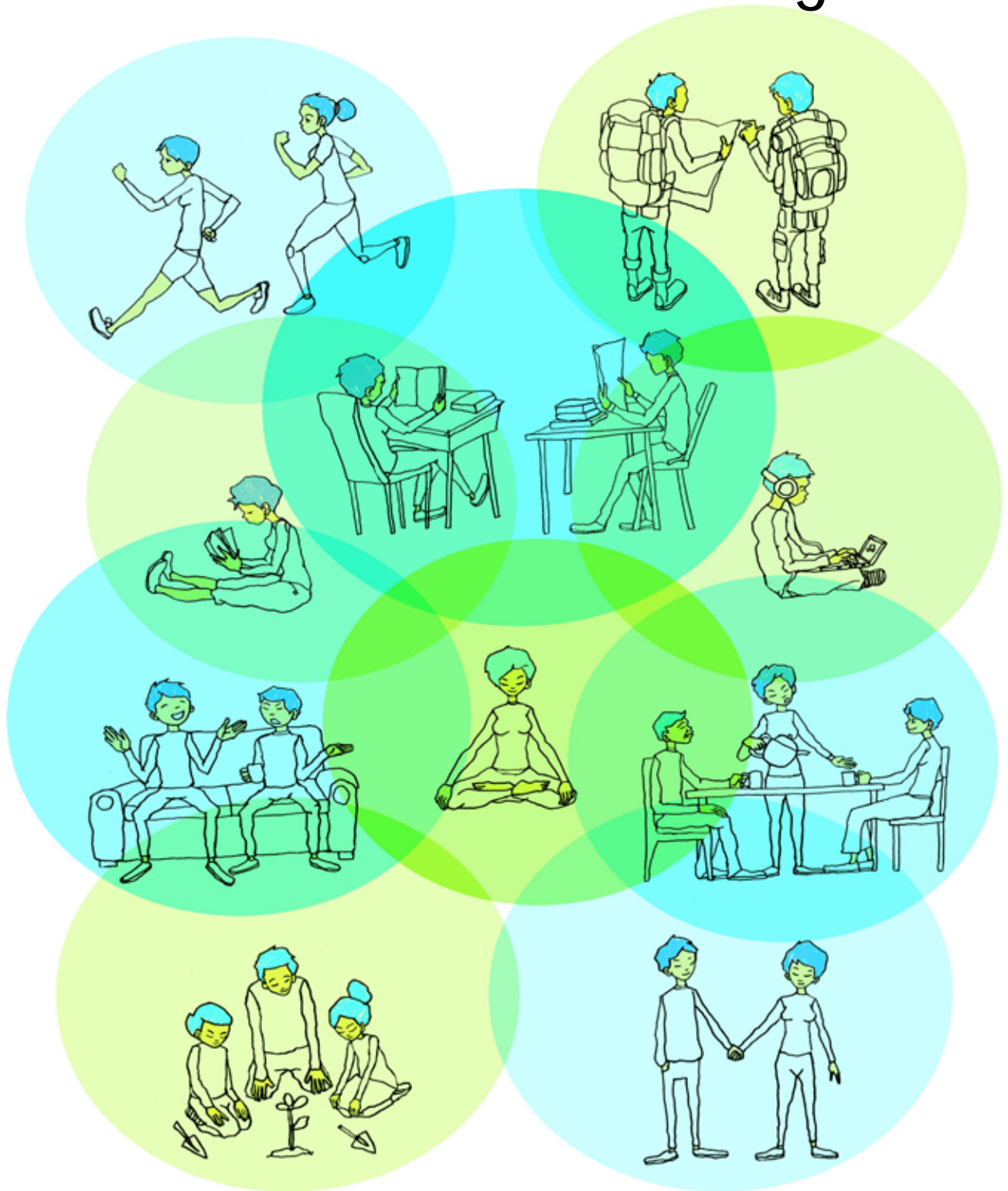
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# Lifewide Learning & Education in Universities and Colleges



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## CHAPTER C2

# BYOD4L - Our Magical Open Box to Enhance Individuals' Learning Ecologies

*Chrissi Nerantzi and Sue Beckingham*

### SUMMARY

This chapter describes our search for a design and an appropriate conceptual vocabulary to describe an approach to encouraging, supporting and recognising individuals' lifewide learning gained through their engagement with an open online opportunity for learning and sharing learning about the use of mobile devices and a suite of social media applications. We called this opportunity 'Bring Your Own Device for Learning' abbreviated to BYOD4L. The chapter describes the thinking underlying the learning design, the design itself and a flavour of the dynamics of the community process of learning. It draws on theories of learning that appear to offer the most useful explanations for this type of lifewide learning. We draw attention to the potential role of Open Educational Practices (OEP) and Open Educational Resources (OER) in lifewide learning and highlight a number of theories of learning that are particularly relevant to our ecological process.

### BIOGRAPHIES



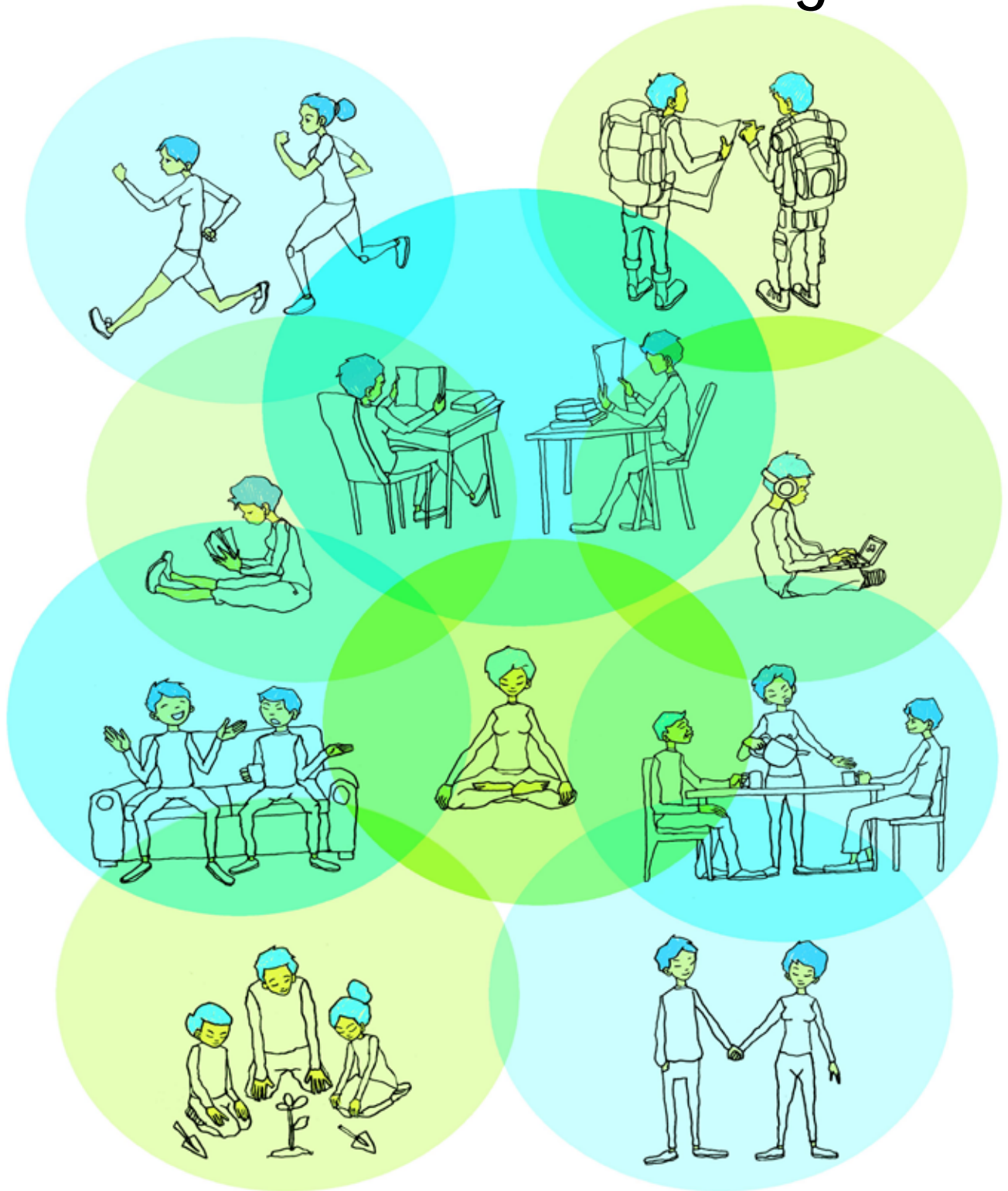
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## AN IDEA THAT INSPIRES US

The world of education is full of 'courses, modules and programmes' with connotations of guiding and supporting learners in a fairly linear way. But the idea of a 'course' seems totally at odds with the world of lifewide learning with its endless possibilities, connectivities, collaborations and emergent needs, interests and opportunities. This chapter describes our search for a design and an appropriate conceptual vocabulary to describe an approach to encouraging, supporting and recognising individuals' lifewide learning (Jackson 2011 and this volume) gained through their engagement with an open online opportunity for learning and sharing learning about the use of mobile devices and a host of social media applications. We called this opportunity 'Bring Your Own Device For Learning' abbreviated to BYOD4L which we are framing as an emerging collaborative learning ecology with the potential to be used by individuals in their own learning ecologies to share their experiences, learning, development and achievements within a supportive community. This way of framing our design enthuses and excites us about lifewide and lifelong learning and enables us to see more clearly how we might help others realise their potential for enjoyment in life and personal growth.

Our search for an appropriate language to describe what we were trying to do, led us to Geary (2012:211) who reminds us that "metaphorical language can describe the indescribable" - words that reflect perfectly the challenge we faced to describe and share our creation more widely. We recognised that we were working within the realm of open educational practices and resources (OEP & OER) but the words to describe what we were doing did not flow immediately. Rather they emerged and eventually we began to see our designed creation as 'our magical open box'. We truly feel that what we brought to life is fully encapsulated in these four tiny words - our - magical - open - box. We will attempt in this chapter to share with you our meanings, journeys, stories and discoveries behind these cherry picked words that will hopefully help you gain a better insight into our collaborative open learning project. (Moon 2010:61) reminds us also that "stories are deliberately designed to engage". We hope to achieve this through our story.

### Our magical open box

A course usually contains a lot of content that participants have to master. The teacher's responsibility is to ensure that learners are guided through the material and learn it.

We viewed our open magical box differently. An open magical box implies that you can put stuff into it - but that it is never full. Stuff can be changed, exchanged and emptied. It can fall out or land in the box accidentally. Anybody who engages with the box can influence its 'content' not only by adding or taking away but by creating new meanings through what they do with it.

Because our box is magical the 'content' is not content as we generally know it. Content here is meant to be an open and fluid pool of opportunities, happenings, events, an open and dynamic system. The box belongs simultaneously to each individual and to all - it is 'ours' individually and collectively including us as the initial creators and the individuals and





communities that join, visitors, residents (White & Le Cornu, 2011) or travellers, for whatever reason, their reason, whatever their goals, needs and interests. But for every person who uses it the box looks, feels and is experienced differently.

It is important to appreciate that the learning enterprise that we are seeking to nurture is not simply about the stuff in the box. It is much more about the people, their identities, values and beliefs, ideas and perspectives, their stories and experiences and what they bring as individuals to the box and how their contributions influence the collective learning enterprise.

It is the contributors who shape the box and invest in it their particular meanings and illustrations that can inspire others. It is the potential and reality of what can be achieved as a collective that is what makes this box magical but also what can be achieved individually thanks to the collective. The content of the box is only as good as the magic we all bring. In fact the real magic in the box is that it enables people to create their own meanings by using the stuff that is in it within their own ecologies for learning, developing and achieving (Jackson 2013a & b).

This is our provisional interpretation. At the moment our magical open box contains three distinct but interwoven creations. These will change over time reflecting its dynamic nature:

- an open but loosely structured process of community interactions and a way of being, through which a personal curriculum gradually emerges
- a development event or process for extending and enhancing individuals' learning ecologies and for supporting a self-organising community of interest
- a range of mechanisms for sharing and curating individuals' and collective learning book or multimedia vehicle for the sharing and continuing development of knowledge

It also contains the unimagined possibility of entirely new and unexpected things emerging from the relationships, communications and activities we hope it will stimulate.

## A bigger context

There is a saying "you only get out of something what you put into it". This is also true for our open box. The box has a life of its own and will exist as long as there are people with flames in their bellies, open minds fuelled by their own and collective curiosity who have a shared interest and a desire to come together, learn together and grow. Could it be that there are similarities between 'our magical open box' and Lemke's (2013: 4) notion of us growing into a village or perhaps 'our villages' as we occupy many villages in life?

Jackson (2006:1) notes that "our ability to imagine and then invent new worlds for ourselves is one of our greatest human assets and the origin of all human achievement." In a way, we imagined 'our magical open box' as an open learning ecosystem. In KnowledgeWorks (2012:2) it is recognised that "Teaching and learning have become uncoupled from traditional educational institutions and are now available through and enhanced by a vibrant learning ecosystem." This decoupling presents new, exciting and more open and joined-up opportunities. How is technology contributing to this? Seely Brown (2012:14) suggests that the 21st century actually marks a 'Big Shift' and the beginning of times driven by "digital



innovations” and characterised by “exponential change and emergence, socially and culturally”. Changes will be rapid, much shorter lived and constant. How can we prepare for an ever faster changing world? We created a ‘new world’, to use Jackson’s phrase, an ecosystem shaped by its spaces, people, contexts, purposes, satellite communities and networks, relationships, technologies and resources that will enable us to study the learning ecologies within in and beyond it, how they develop, change, evolve and regenerate.

## OUR EDUCATIONAL DESIGN

From the descriptions above it is clear that we do not view our educational design as a rigid, linear, pre-packed and constraining construction requiring learners to tread a particular course or pathway. In our view what would traditionally be described as ‘the course’ is the community and all its conversations and interactions are lived and experienced as a progressively emerging curriculum. What we were trying to do is more like what Siemens (2002, online) describes as an *un-course* where the facilitator provides the topic which is then co-developed and co-constructed by learners and facilitators. Viewed in these terms, our open magical box is really about enabling people to develop further their own ecologies for learning by providing them with firstly an opportunity to access some curated resources that were relevant to the aim of the design and were around five (5) broader thematic areas: connecting, communicating, curating, collaborating and creating.

## Why BYOD?

BYOD is one of those acronyms that emerges in the modern world regardless of whether we like it or not. It was used initially for Bring Your Own Drink (BYOD) if you are American or BYOB (bottle) if you are an Australian. You might also have heard Bring Your Own Booz or Bring Your Own Cocktail and there are restaurants where one can BYOD(rink). However, our ‘D’ has perhaps less to do with ‘D’ as in drink, but in a way it is a ‘cocktail’, metaphorically speaking. Our BYOD, and how it is used widely nowadays, stands for **BYOD(evice)** or BYOD(evices) as too often we have a few of them. The devices we are referring to are digital technologies. The ones we have in our pockets, in our bags. The ones we carry around with us all the time, such as smartphones and tablets. They are constantly switched on, and make many of us feel we are in a state of constantly being connected. In the context of this story we will be exploring BYOD from a healthy point of view with a focus on learning and development.

Right at the start of our BYOD event, one of the participants asked a question “Does it have to be a device or can it be just a tool?” This question was useful and helped us to refocus and remind ourselves what it was about. These devices or technologies are indeed just tools. Wenger et al. (2009) also refer to technologies as tools and ‘packaged suits of tools’ that support community activities which are often distributed across multiple platforms. Tools come and go, they change all the time. A quick zoom through history reveals that we drew on cave walls, papyrus, paper, blackboards and more recently, we started drawing on interactive whiteboards and touchscreens. We still use our fingers, sticks, brushes, paints and other tools and materials. The human activity is still recognisable and we still like drawing on a sandy beach for example but also leaving messages on room walls, pillars and



desks. What has changed are the opportunities to draw in and on different media and share our drawings with others but also use these to make other creations using a variety of low and high-or digital tech tools which we carry around with us in our pockets and bags.

Once upon a time, when Socrates was around and writing started to spread he was against this technology. If people would define writing as a tool for expression, perhaps he would have understood and not rebelled against it? But then people will resist anything that makes them feel out-of control and shakes up their normality and status-quo. For us it is important to remember, that it is not about the tool but what it enables, what we can do with it and what impact it has on a specific human activity. Replacing the word 'device' or 'technology' with 'tool' makes them somehow a more integrated part of human life. We have used tools and used tools to make other tools, for millennia. When we consulted the Online Oxford Dictionary, we found the following definition under 'tool': "a device or implement, especially one held in the hand, used to carry out a particular function." This fits like a glove with our use of handheld tool. Could the word 'tool' reduce the fear factor for some? We are beginning to think that BYOT might be a more appropriate umbrella concept!

**Figure 1** BYOD4L magical open box



## BYOD4L social and virtual spaces, activities and resources

Figure 1 provides a symbolic representation of the social and virtual spaces, activities and resources underpinning BYOD4L. While it looks compartmentalised in reality it is a dynamic system that is constantly growing and changing responding to the individuals who interact with it, their motivations and intentions. The system has been created by us, its creators. As Jackson (2013a: 4) states such systems "have to be imagined, actions and activities have to be planned to a greater or lesser degree, choices have to be made about what or what not to do, effects have to be observed and experienced and actions have to be modified in response to what happens."

As soon as it is released and its heart grows, it fills up without being ever full. Far from having clear discrete compartments and an ordered and predictable set of happenings



boundaries are blurred, activities merge and stuff emerges in an organic way. What happens is pushed and pulled in different directions, for different reasons and in different moments in time, by its inhabitants and their social context. The space extends and shrinks. Its compartments, their existence and size at a specific moment in time, are lived and interpreted uniquely by each individual. This means that the 'generic' box can be fully personalised and adjusted to the individual who makes it their own. The box is merely the opportunity for individuals to create their own magical open boxes that sit within or beyond our magical open box or at least linked to the original magical open box through social connections? Writing about it now, it does make sense to us.

The arrows represent constant movement and interactions of people inside and outside the learning system - fluidity and multi-directedness is anticipated but mostly unforeseen and unplanned as relationships and connections develop and evolve intentionally or unintentionally. The people are the magic of this box. Together they form the heart, the self-organising system and the community. They share ideas, resources, develop and adapt processes, relationships and define their own social context.

## BYOD4L process

Learning and developing is a process and our design for BYOD4L created a process for lots of people to learn together through the agency of the internet. The aim of the process was 'to provide students and teachers with a range of opportunities to explore the use of smart devices for learning and teaching in their own context in an immersive, open and collaborative environment.'

BYOD4L took the form of a facilitated event organised and supported over five days. Each day was dedicated to a topic - communicating, connecting, collaborating, creating and curating. We created a website <http://byod4learning.wordpress.com> which hosted video-based scenarios, some suggested activities and an abundance of tools to stimulate interest and imagination. The approach was not so much 'learning about' as actually 'learning through the experience of doing': to participate was to embody - communicating, connecting, collaborating, creating and curating.

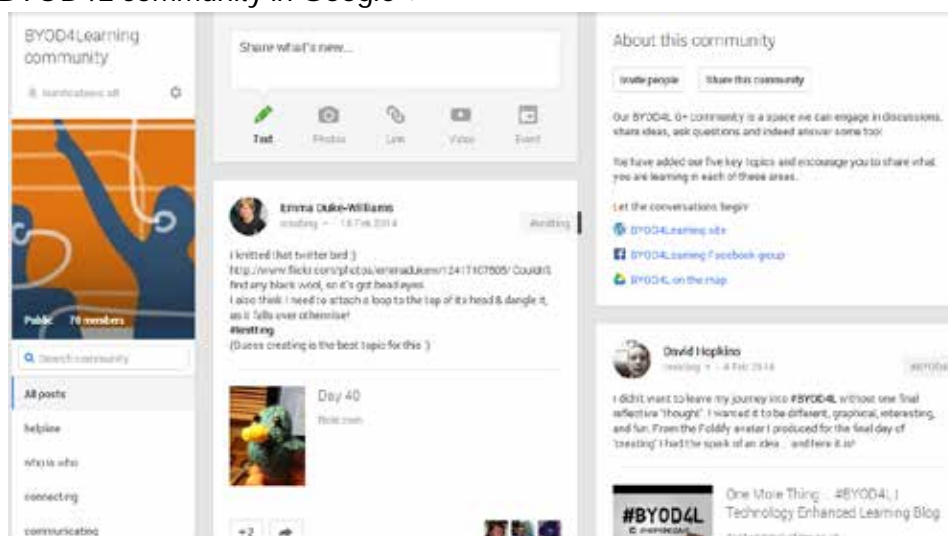
## *What we did*

BYOD4L was a series of learning events set-up on freely available social media tools and platforms to provide pick 'n' mix learning opportunities that enabled authentic, inquiry-based engagement and learning on the go, independently or with others. For each of the five broad topics synchronous and asynchronous activities and intended outcomes were suggested to scaffold learning for those who needed or wanted it. These included open discussions in the BYOD4L community space (Figure 2) and a daily Tweet chat focused around a specific topic (Figure 3) also captured at <http://storify.com/melsiguk>. There were however, no limitations on how to engage. Everybody could make their own path through the resources, ideas, community interactions and exchanges and their own everyday contexts, without feeling lonely and come together with others in a community to reflect, create, share and co-construct new realities, new learning through inquiry, dialogue and collaboration. Although



implicit, it was understood that individuals had the freedom to come in and out, listen and observe or directly contribute in real time or at any time after the event.

**Figure 2** BYOD4L community in Google +



**Figure 3** Illustrations of tweets from daily tweet chat



## Facilitation

Facilitators were co-learners in this process but they also played a vital role in creating a warm atmosphere, where fruitful conversations could take place, so that individuals felt part of what was happening, supported and felt listened to by facilitators and the emerging community. The BYOD4L hub sits on Wordpress with connected spaces which included a Google+ community, Google Drive, a Facebook group and Twitter, but also tools such as Scoop.it, Storify and Edshelf, that made (digital) participation on the go possible if the internet connection was there. But learning happens everywhere not just when we are connected to the net and we were delighted to find out about local spin-offs and events organised in different locations and institutions as a result of BYOD4L. Learners who joined

were encouraged to actively experiment and use additional tools and digital spaces for reflection, learning through making and sharing. Open badges were first introduced by the Mozilla Foundation in 2010 as a way to recognise informal learning (Glover and Latif, 2013). In BYOD4L open badges were created and issued by the Media Enhanced Special Interest Group (MEL SIG) who led this educational initiative and peer reviewed for those learners and facilitators, who wanted recognition for their achievements. An external peer reviewer to the BYOD4L team was chosen to review work submitted by the BYOD4L facilitators. Evidence was submitted in media-rich digital portfolios (example available at <http://lozeagle.wordpress.com/>) and included reflections as well as creative learning artefacts, such as images, mindmaps, videos etc. (Figure 4)

**Figure 4** Visualisations of learning during BYOD4L



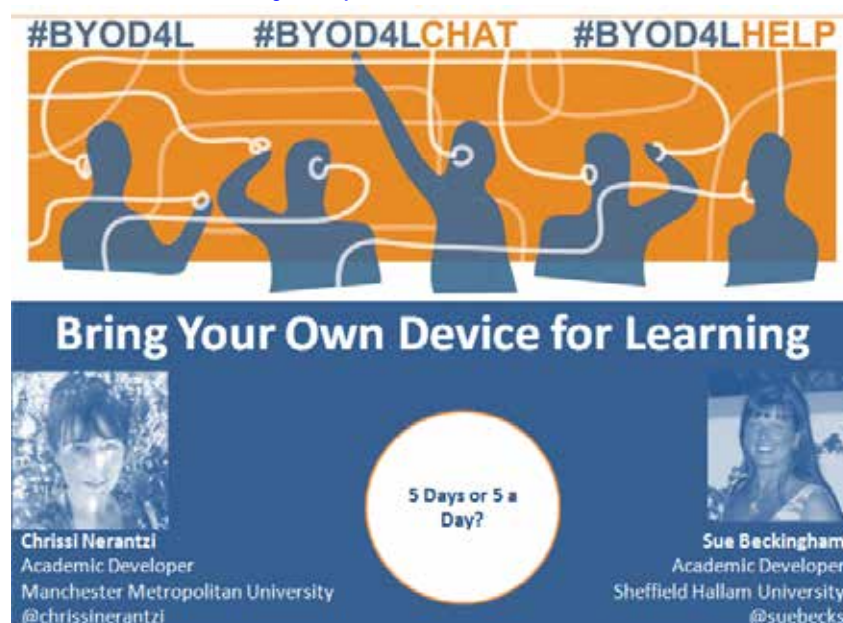
## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Creating and facilitating BYOD4L was a fascinating experience. A flavour of the dynamics of the experience can be gained from a summary slideshow (Figure 5). Looking while the memories are still fresh, we feel that it was worth playing and experimenting with pedagogical ideas and discovering whether they would work. During the design phase of BYOD4L community building was on the top of our wish list. It was never just about the tools but finding ways to bring individuals together through the sharing of how tools might be used in the service of supporting learners and learning. The designers and facilitators agreed that this was our central purpose and together we tried to make it happen. We were extremely lucky to work with such a team of committed colleagues from different institutions, who had the drive to enthuse and support others but also each other. The connections we created with each other were special, powerful and increased the sense of collective and shared ownership of this project. There is some evidence already that further collaborations will grow out of this one. This is an exciting possibility and motivating for all of us.



**Figure 5** BYOD4L Review

<http://www.slideshare.net/chrisi/byod4lpresentation-final-3-feb-30771074>



Individuals who joined BYOD4L enriched the learning experience for all of us. We had exciting times together, discussing and debating, but also creating and reflecting. We were amazed with the level of engagement and very pleased that individuals didn't feel lonely. Our learners talked about BYOD4L as a 'festival' and 'feeling the buzz' and these words came from the mouths of our learners and facilitators. We learnt that we can't expect to get without giving and the more we gave, the more we got. We learnt that spending time building relationships is time worth spending. We learnt that we need to learn to trust each other and be there for each other. But we also learnt that sharing our passion will help us connect with others; and that openness about our own individual hurdles evoked empathy.

### What some of our learners learnt

We encouraged experimentation through modelling our own experiments. We took risks and our learners did so too. We were playful and our learners played. Many of our learners were new to the concepts of using smart tools for learning and teaching but they had an open mind to their participation and continued involvement. They also persisted through the inevitable frustrations that are part and parcel of using these technologies until they were able to immerse themselves in creative activities that were of value for them. There always seemed to be someone in the BYOD4L community that was there in an instance to respond to a cry for help or to answer a question. Their stories evidence rich engagement and authentic learning that goes beyond BYOD4L and will have an impact on practices. We invited participants to sum up their experience in a single word (Figure 6): learning with others and feeling supported seems to have been valuable for so many but also having the freedom and the flexibility to learn and engage.

**Figure 6** BYOD4L How the community summed up their experience in one word



## THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While taking our first steps in defining our magical open box conceptually and sharing it here, we came across a number of definitions and frameworks that provide a theoretical underpinning to our educational adventure.

## Rhizomatic learning

Cormier (2008) for example sees the “community as curriculum”, a non-expert driven pedagogical model. He has experimented with and written extensively about the idea of rhizomatic learning, a philosophical concept introduced by Deleuze & Guatarri (1987). When Cormier refers to 'rhizomatic learning' he describes it as a messy and dynamic, organic and elastic being where the coupling and decoupling of connections, the marrying and divorcing of people, ideas, communities and networks happen all the time in myriad ways. For Cormier, there are unlimited entry and exit points. Individuals join in, appear and disappear or make themselves visible and invisible when they want to. They make and break connections. Rhizomatic learning is dynamic and changes all the time and over time. There are unlimited directions and pathways, cross roads and roundabouts. Rhizomes create their own journeys and at times follow others driven by their own internal compass. They feel lost and get lost. There are no experts or authorities and individual and collective knowledge emerges through the rhizomes, through the individuals and the links they make. Are rhizomes as roots; that are rooted and de-rooted continuously; a metaphor for connections; or an ephemeral representation of these? What is the relationship between rhizomatic learning and connectivist learning?



We have more questions than answers. Is it a community, what type of community, when we refer to rhizomatic learning or more of a nomadic or self-centred ecosystem? How is information turned into knowledge within such a system? The links or connections themselves seem to be ephemeral, stronger and other times weaker, often they break off and start fresh elsewhere. Is this free-range learning? The focus seems to be more on the individual. The rhizomatic learning ecosystem itself resembles perhaps more a cosmos with an unlimited set of visible, invisible or partly-visible amalgamated decentralised cultures, communities, networks, satellites and chaotic ecologies - or is it chaos and what does it mean for learning? Siemens (2006, viii) claims "structure is created by a select few and imposed on the many". If rhizomes or non-rhizomes resist organisational structures, as Deleuze & Guatarri (1987) claim and they, or even we, want to be in charge of our own learning should we as educators and learners, spend more time thinking about how we can enable this instead of focusing enormous energies in creating complex and complicated spaces and systems that do exactly the opposite? From the little we have read about rhizomatic learning we can see overlaps with our conceptual framework and this why we choose to make reference to it here but we divorce ourselves from the interpretation of community in the context of rhizomatic learning and are wondering now, if it is easier to start defining our magical open box by saying what it isn't?

## Digital habitats

Our thoughts are currently more in line with Wenger et al. (2009: 3) and their idea of "digital habitats - that of learning together in communities of practice" as well as the learner generated context model (Luckin et al, 2010). We see these two concepts as interpretations of learning ecologies that enable pan-participation and experiences based on common concerns using available technologies. The emphasis seems to be more on 'together' and this is important to us too: The common concern or goal and the strength of their inter- and intra-connections is the glue that keeps these communities together and helps them grow and evolve. While Lave's & Wenger's (1991) community of practice model refers to informal or situated learning, Luckin's et al. (2010) framework present an opportunity for change of informal and formal educational practices. Both focus on capitalising on the effective use of technology to support learning. Luckin et al. (2010: 72-73) define the Learner Generated Context as "a context created by people interacting together with a common, self-defined learning goal. The key aspect of Learner Generated Contexts is that they are generated through the enterprise of those who would previously have been consumers in a context created for them". And does this all relate to Cormier's (2008) observation that knowledge is something that emerges from within a community and Wenger's et al. (2009) knowledge as a lived experience and not just a product? There seems to be overlap of theoretical perspectives regarding knowledge co-creation, context drivers and emerging curricula that are knitted loosely together and form the dynamic fabric of learning.

The above observations do not exclude rhizomatic co-habitation of more nomadic nature within our magical open box. Creating multiple and varied opportunities for togetherness utilising digital tools that enable, foster and extend the marrying of individuals, networks, groups, connections and ideas which according to Wenger et al. (2009: 59) "opens the possibilities for extreme multimembership", played a vital role in the design of our magical open box. The horizontal and dynamic togetherness and how this is lived and achieved

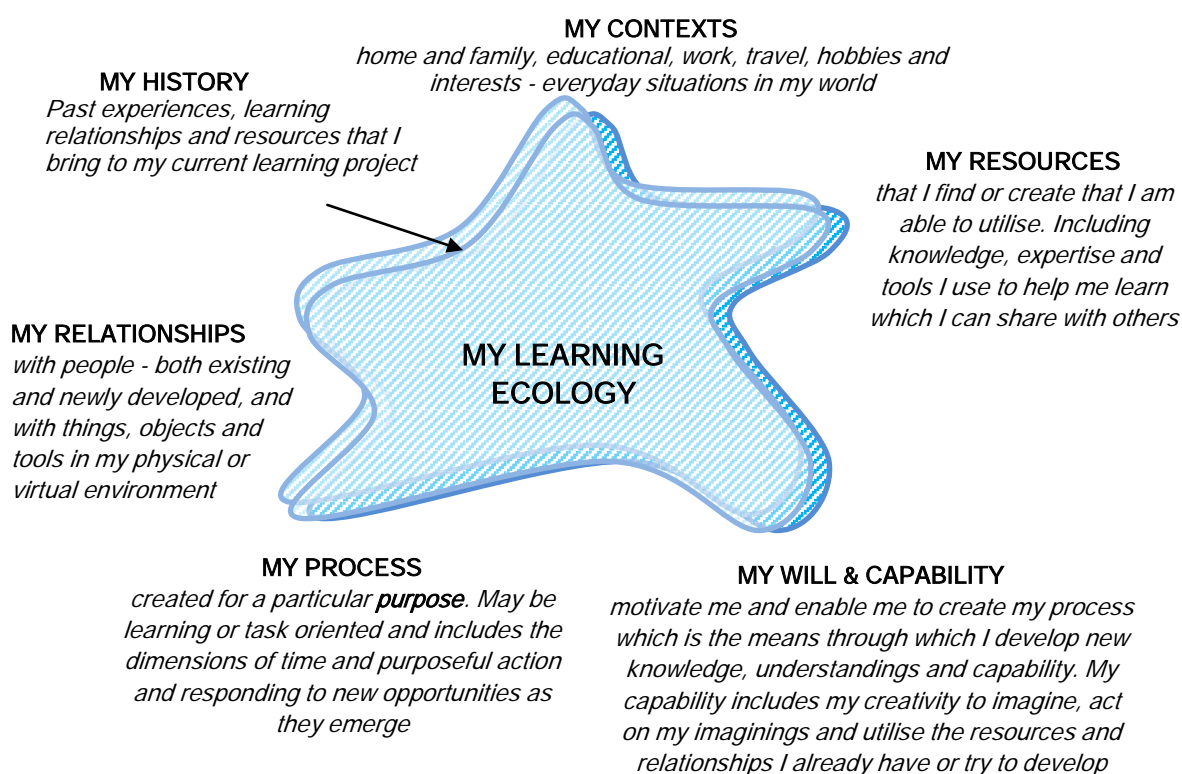


through sharing of stories, experiences, vision and learning together cooperatively and collaboratively with and from each other, in a supportive learning ecology is the make up of how we understand community and shape its identity. Otherwise doesn't community reflect a random amalgamation of singletons or just an opportunistic and ephemeral creation of disconnected travellers? Trust is a vital ingredient of communities but how do we establish trust in open learning ecologies?

## Learning ecologies

What we helped to create through the BYOD4L opportunity was effectively a learning ecology "a process(es) created in a particular context for a particular purpose that provides opportunities, relationships and resources for learning, development and achievement" (Jackson 2013a:14). Jackson (ibid 2) reminds us that "each context comprises a unique configuration of purposes, activities, material resources, relationships and the interactions and mediated learning that emerge from them" (Figure 7).

**Figure 7** Key components of an individual's learning ecology Jackson's (2013b:2)



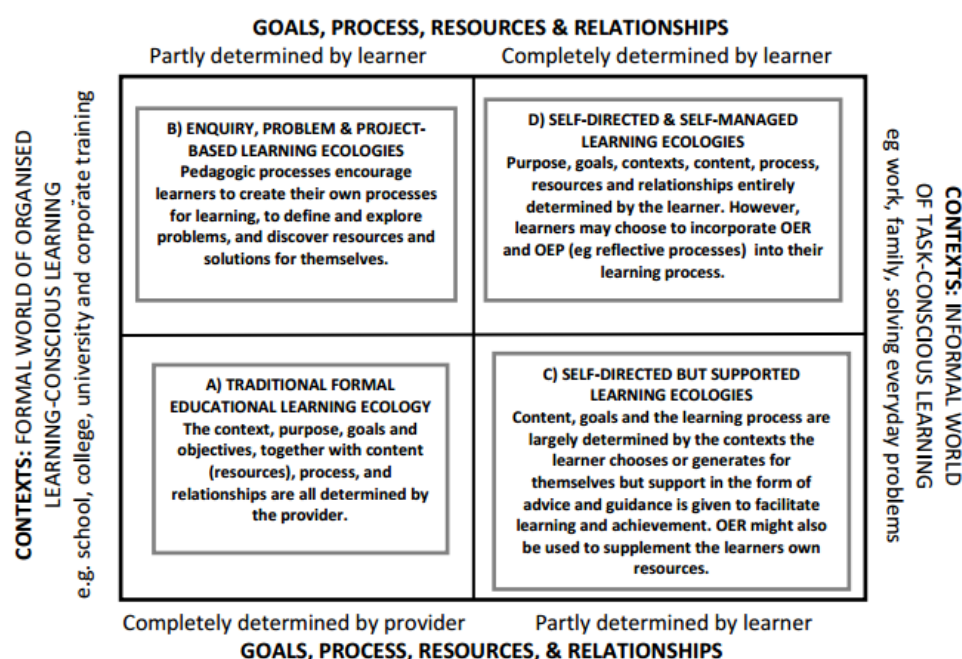
Do we all create our own magical open box? Our own learning ecology? Can we speak about self-created and self-sustained personal learning ecologies (Jackson, 2013a)? We see similarities between Jackson's (2013a) individual learning ecology (Figure 5) and our magical open box (Figure 1) as atomistic ecological systems. Both representations despite their differences visually, are fluid and are defined and determined by the individual, their history and their wider context and how this influences and drives motivations and aspirations, accessibility and connections, activities and actions, engagement and participation but also reflection, learning and development. The questions in Figure 1 show



the individual and collective drivers and decisions made continuously by people who are the make-up of the box, their relationships with each other and its magic. The 'Who', 'Where', 'How' and 'What' compartments represent activity and engagement, underpinned by the 'Why', our individual and collective curiosity and drivers that bring us together within the magical open box as a learning ecology that is interconnected with the outside world, in fact it is in part of the world and fully integrated into it, not an add-on!

BYOD4L has features from sections B and C of Jackson's (2013a) categorisation of learning ecologies shown in Figure 8. First and foremost the design fosters a collaborative inquiry-based approach, where creators, facilitators and participants are all habitants, co-learners and co-producers, who support each other when needed and facilitate individual and collective learning and development. The box or system has been co-produced through a process of co-creation of open educational resources and practices that can be re-used, adapted and repurposed for other contexts. However, when viewed from a participant's perspective and their learning ecology, it is more likely that the learning ecology occupies the conceptual space of D in figure 8.

**Figure 8** Categorisation of learning ecologies and their educational contexts. (OER - Open Educational Resources, OEP - Open Educational Practices). Source: Jackson (2013a)



## IMPLICATIONS FOR TRADITIONAL HE PROGRAMMES

In BYOD4L the curriculum is gradually emerging. Could BYOD4L also resemble somehow what Barnett & Coate (2005) call a *curriculum-in-action*? We feel that our design probably sits uncomfortably with more traditional HE programmes. BYOD4L, doesn't deliver anything. Nothing is covered. In the contrary, individuals engaging with BYOD4L uncover and make their own discoveries, define their own learning goals. Redecker et al. (2011) indicate that holistic changes are needed to transform education more generally to foster personalisation,

collaboration but also informalisation as these are features of learning in the future. Could our conceptual framework provide a useful vehicle towards achieving this?

The BYOD4L opportunity sits within the domain of Open Education Resources and Open Educational Practices. The online environment meant that anyone could access the opportunity from anywhere and there were no fees for participation. The opportunity was essentially subsidised by the institutions of the designers and facilitators and was offered as informal CPD for staff and PDP for students in these institutions. At the same time joining-up and forming informal collaborations among people and their institutions, sharing resources and expertise for the common good of these institutions, the sector and the wider learning community beyond monetary fruits, as BYOD4L was also wide-open to anybody else beyond participating institutions, could perhaps form the basis of a more sustainable model for institutions and individuals in these institutions to consider to enable informal grass route cross-institutional alliances to emerge and establish, that enrich learning and development, exchange and sharing but also collaboration.

The importance of Personal Development Planning (PDP) for students and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff in HE has been widely recognised. Could our conceptual framework be packaged as *shell modules* and embedded into the fabric of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and provide a more authentic and somehow informalised dimension to learning that could be recognised (formally)? Shell modules would house practice- and evidence-based PDP and CPD activities, formal and informal, enable individuals to construct their own individual learning ecologies, grow and bring individuals together in a supportive learning community where learning and achievement is celebrated. We seem to talk a lot today about personalisation, learning in collaboration and in partnership with students and are recognising the need to support students and staff well so that they become autonomous, self-organised and self-directed and learn to love learning, not just while studying or working at university but for all their lives, formally and informally. If we want our students and staff to have their own dreams, pursue their own personal and professional goals and really be in the driving seat of their learning and development, could the BYOD4L approach help them learn to drive?

HE stands for experimentation, innovation, advancement of knowledge. But no longer does all this happen exclusively behind the walled gardens of higher education. No longer are higher education institutions the monopoly, gatekeepers and producers of all knowledge. Technological advancements have changed the scenery and new players claim their position in the spotlight. Can universities afford to be seen as operating outside the everyday world their learners live in? What about the market forces? The world is changing rapidly. It is much more open. However, there is still a divide between what is happening in everyday life and in higher education (Wiley & Hilton: 2009). Often HE is accused of being stuck in anachronistic pedagogies, even when examining some of the more recent open educational practices that claim to educate the masses. Higher education needs to dream-up more flexible pedagogies (Ryan & Tilbury, 2013), to open-up and join-up (European Commission, 2013), to become more collaborative so that it can continue to innovate, to enthuse and not just 'mass-produce' graduates. We need lifewide and lifelong citizens who will be able to knit their own individual learning ecologies and create a better world. New opportunities to do so



are afforded by emerging technologies where we all need to learn to multiplex rather than struggle to multitask (Chorost, 2011). Smart devices or tools can give us wings (Cochrane & Bateman, 2010)! We see a great opportunity to re-think and un-think how we *do* HE and create the conditions for a learning ecology to emerge, where new pedagogical offers can grow and flourish. This won't happen by osmosis; we need to scaffold, encourage, support and recognise; reflecting upon what we have learnt and share good practice with the community.

## PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

As we write just two weeks after our experience of facilitating BYOD4L we realise that we have only just begun to scratch the surface of our thoughts attempting to define conceptually our magical open box. And perhaps this piece of writing sees us already departing from the box metaphor as our conceptual explorations travelled us into ecological terrains. Is our magical open box more a garden, a meadow or a magical suitcase we take with us on individual and collective learning adventures? Our learning journey is exciting and all the more so when shared.

We know that our educational design, together with the networks of relationships we created to support the design, will attract and engage people in ways that will lead to the development of a community at least for the duration of the process. A community of individuals prepared to participate in a learning enterprise, and share their learning and understandings in ways that enable the whole community to benefit. We also know from the sharings of individuals' blogs and portfolios that individuals drew benefit from the experience. We need more time to reflect on the experience and what emerged from it and to make sense of it all in the wider context and find a much clearer language to describe with precision what our magical open box really means to us and others within the open learning ecosystem. We need to identify to what extent it marries, satisfies and extends the human need to create, foster and develop communities and the desire to discover and learn about ourselves, others and the world.

Our magical open box is out there now and the real excitement is exploring how this is lived by its people, by its distributed communities and ecologies and how its shape will change and evolve in myriad ways. Without people, there is no magic in our box - it is just a box of stuff waiting for people to bring it alive. People, and their imaginations and creations, are the magic in our open box, and all and every other open box.

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other. (Freire, 2011: 72)

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