Amy: But is it really cheap? Rumble (2001) highlights that something somewhere has to give - you either compromise quality to keep costs down or you retain quality but promote costs onto the learner.

MOOCs have the potential to be exceptionally powerful - the government pays Universities for knowledge dissemination and community engagement activities,

Dani: I am not so sure that **high** Education **should be f**ree**. Perhaps only** vocational training – e.g. so people could become plumbers, electricians etc. There is often a real shortage of these skills in an economy. People who gain a degree, end up with a relatively higher salary. Therefore, if they financially gain from studying at university, it is perhaps fair they pay part of the cost. If the government can guarantee equality of opportunity for everyone to get a job, then it is up to the individuals to invest time, effort and money for a high Besides, from what I see in my surroundings, when something is not free, **it makes people value more**. If people have to pay to go to university, you could argue that they would value the education more. Another reason

Justin: What complicates things a little further for MOOCs in the current economic climate for governments is the fact students on the courses come from all over the world - and not necessarily tax payers of the country. In the UK this is already a divisive issue in other areas of government policy. I can imagine The Daily Mail salivating over a story about the government providing taxpayers money for free education world-wide, when students in England have to pay for higher education….

Perhaps there is a role for cross-nation funding bodies to become more involved - the EU and the United Nations? Grants for universities that provide free online courses for students world-wide? This may already be happening so correct me if I'm wrong.

Stephen: As you say Amy, someone has to pay in somewhere and there is a constant fear of not making a return on that investment. Partially this is because of where they are looking for the return, of course.

John: 1) Maybe we can entice these folk to work in the rural areas?

2) I would suspect that much “homework” would have to be done before venturing into the distance education game in a developing country.

 3) I have to wonder what things are going to look like in 5 years. In 10 years? The field on mobile education is exciting and will have huge implications for the classroom and for developing countries. There’s an app for everything these days

4) HE must adopt (or adapt) to the technology demanded by today’s learners in order to remain a viable entity.

Rory: There's a discussion to be had there about the pros and cons of aid, which could be useful for thinking about MOOCs (or at least the free MOOCs - MOOCs-for-profit are a different game, and maybe before too long will be the only game).

Stephen: I like itunes as a way to get music, occasionally. I prefer to buy CDs, it seems more ‘real’ to have the packaging and an actual item rather than just a file on an ipod. I will occasionally also buy a single track. The problem with this, from the point of view of musicians at least, is that when they put an album out, it’s sequenced in a particular way for a purpose.

What you will also get with this version of online learning is a two tier system. The rich will get the real university experience, with the accrual of social and cultural capital it brings, and the contact with academics and other students with all of the benefits that sort of interaction has for learning and for developing networks. The poor will get a cheap copy - looking through the window of the university.

I'm not sure that e-learning, or any kind of learning, is going to solve the rich-poor gap on its own. Inequality is a systemic feature of capitalism. An education system that prepares people for the 'knowledge economy' is just feeding the monster.

How do you know if an online course is good or not?

Free education is good or not?