

# Sitting in a bar with a really smart friend

**What can Stanford's free computer science courses tell us about the future of online learning?**

A 50 minute workshop led by Seb Schmoller, Chief Executive of the Association for Learning Technology (ALT) at the LSIS "Technology for Success" conference on 8 March 2012 in Birmingham

<http://repository.alt.ac.uk/2212/>

## Running order

1. Spend 15 minutes being learners on two small chunks of the “original” AI course
2. Reflect for 10 minutes on the experience, in groups of (say) 4
3. Discuss findings in plenary

## 15 minutes being learners on two small chunks of the “original” AI course

1. Connect to the Wifi
2. Go to the course web site - <https://www.ai-class.com/home/>
3. Small chunk #1: Unit 16, Computer Vision I, Sections 1 to 4, starting at <https://www.ai-class.com/course/video/videolecture/179> - work through the first **four** sections (~7 minutes)
4. Small chunk #2: Unit 5, Machine Learning, Sections 1 to 3, starting at <https://www.ai-class.com/course/video/videolecture/47> - work through the first **three** sections (~8 minutes)

## **Reflect on the experience for 10 minutes**

Please think about things like

- The main characteristics of the process
- What being a learner felt like
- Your thoughts about the “production values”
- Practical questions about the workings of the course
- The contexts, if any, for which this kind of learning design might work in FE

## Discussion of findings in plenary

Possible headings:

1. Practical questions about the workings of the course
2. Learning methods – general
3. Applicability of the approach to FE
  - which kinds of learning?
  - which kinds of learner
  - any preconditions for success

## Points prepared earlier.....

1. The AI course had a strong Stanford connection, but was offered by a start-up
2. Very small chunks of video (1-5 minutes compared with the Khan Academy's 10-12 minutes – 1000 individual assets for a small course)
3. Copious use of quiz questions, with ambiguity actively embraced
4. Low production values (Udacity's are a bit higher)
5. Learner-led support forums
6. Voluntary translation of audio channels into multiple languages
7. Weekly home-works with marks counting to final grades
8. Two ~4 hour open book exams per term
9. No programming environment
10. Bespoke VLE
11. A retention rate that pushed 50%
12. Stars and their role as teachers
13. This is not the only kind of Massive Online Open Course (for more on this see the 29/2/2012 talk by George Siemens referenced on the next slide).

## Additional material, contact details, and CC attribution

1. *Learning in an Open World* – Peter Norvig’s talk at the 2007 ALT conference – some of this feels now to be almost a “statement of intent” <http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2007/>
2. My mid-term write up of and analysis of the AI course <http://tinyurl.com/6o3kmrs>
3. *Take the red pill*. Sebastian Thrun talks candidly about the experience of running the AI course (please ignore the awful introduction) - <http://fm.schmoller.net/2012/01/sebastian-thruns-reflection-on-the-ai-course.html>
4. New Yorker Rob Rambrusch and Gundega Dekena from Lithuania reflect on their experiences as learners on the AI course:
  - <http://fm.schmoller.net/2011/12/sitting-in-a-bar-with-a-really-smart-friend.html>
  - <http://fm.schmoller.net/2011/12/apples-screwdrivers-and-desks.html>
5. My end-of course write-up of the AI course <http://tinyurl.com/6ramuq9>
6. Udacity – <http://udacity.com/>
7. Aiquis – <http://aiqus.com/>
8. *The 2 Sigma Problem: The Search for Methods of Group Instruction as Effective as One-to-One Tutoring*, by Benjamin Bloom. Educational Researcher, 13:6 (4-16) - <http://www.webcitation.org/65yvaiZRJ>
9. *Massive open online courses as new educative practice* – slides from a talk on 29 February 2012 in València by Canadian George Siemens <http://tinyurl.com/7yphlcf>
10. *Instruction for Masses Knocks Down Campus Walls* – 4/3/2012 New York Times article by Tamar Lewin <http://tinyurl.com/7bxcfps>

Seb Schmoller - @sebschmoller / [seb.schmoller@alt.ac.uk](mailto:seb.schmoller@alt.ac.uk)

ALT – <http://www.alt.ac.uk/> @A\_L\_T

[Last updated 7 March 2012 – these materials are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported licence: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>. If you reuse or adapt please suitably acknowledge ALT and the author.]