

MOOCS AND OPEN PRACTICES: AN ACTIVITY THEORY VIEW

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MOOCs and open practices: an activity theory view

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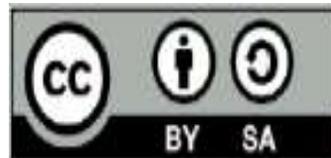
Teaching and Learning conference,

University of Cape Town

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Centre for
Innovation in
Learning and
Teaching



Research question

How do educators' openness-related practices and attitudes change or not change after teaching on/creating a MOOC?

<http://roer4d.org/sp10-3-impact-of-oer-in-and-as-moocs-in-south-africa>

What is a MOOC?

Massive (thousands of participants)

Open (no entry requirements)

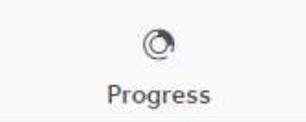
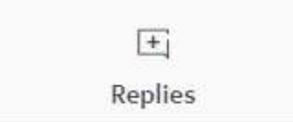
Online (digitally mediated)

Course

- 6 week course, each week divided into steps
- Videos, text, links, quizzes, peer-reviewed assignments, comment section on each step



What is a Mind? Mark Solms



WEEK 1: UNDERSTANDING THE MIND

21 weeks ago



Welcome to the course

We welcome everyone and consider why it is important to ask the question: What is a Mind?

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO WHAT IS A MIND? VIDEO (03:57)

1.2 YOUR INTEREST IN THE MIND DISCUSSION



1.1

YOU'VE COMPLETED 0 STEPS IN WEEK 1



[View transcript](#)

[Download video: standard or HD](#)

Introduction to What is a Mind?

[257 comments](#)

Mark Solms - Professor of Psychology, University of Cape Town

When I was six years old, I began to question the Christian religious beliefs that had been fostered in me through attendance at weekly 'Sunday School', and I started wondering about life after death. I realised that I needed to develop an understanding of the mind.

As a neuropsychologist, I have researched the links between the clinical findings of psychoanalysis and research findings generated by the neurological sciences.

I welcome you to this course that presents a current understanding of

What are open practices?

Beetham *et al* 2012

Opening up content to those not enrolled

Sharing and collaborating with other practitioners

Re-using content Using or *encouraging others* to use open content

Making knowledge *publicly accessible*

Teaching learning in open contexts

What are open practices?

Hodgkinson-Williams 2014

Pedagogical openness – e.g. student demographics, engagement, imagined audience. e.g. pedagogic strategy

Methodology

Qualitative

Activity theory (framework)

Semi-structured interviews, group interviews, reflection sessions

Artefact analysis

Longitudinal: **just before MOOC goes live, 10 months later**

Coding themes with Nvivo 10

[Link to Annotated bibliography](#)

Methodology

Activity Theory, Engeström 1987

Heuristic

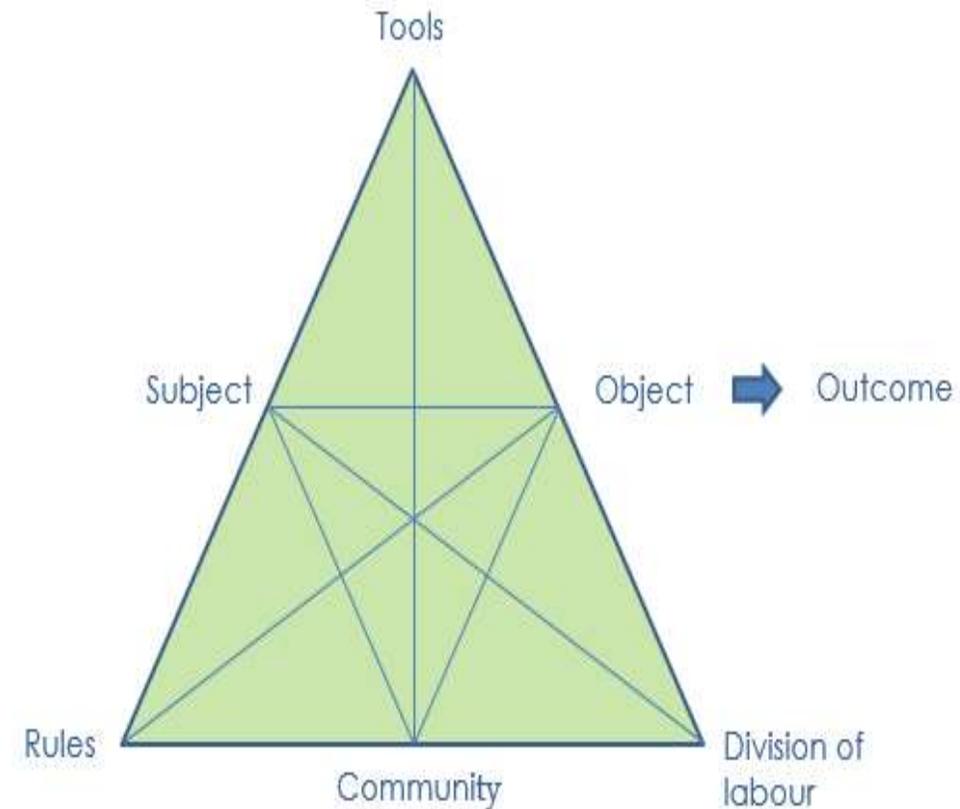
Object-directed systems

Track and describe the effects of introducing of new mediating artefacts

characterised by tensions/ contradictions/ disturbances

Locate opportunities for change

[Link to poster illustration of Activity Theory use](#)



Object: advancing interdisciplinary field

“my pedagogical goal always is... how do I make the *neuroscience accessible to the psychologists*, and how do I make the *life of the mind accessible to neuroscientists*.”

I think that this MOOC is trying to do the same thing”

Object

What is the “mind”? A neuropsychanalytic approach

Mark Solms

I. Introduction

1. Since our engineering colleagues' ultimate aim seems to be the construction of an artificial mind—and since they wish to use our (neuropsychanalytic) knowledge in this regard—it is an ideal opportunity to address the question I have framed in my title: what is a “mind”? In the process of addressing this question, I will of necessity also consider two related questions: where do minds occur in nature? (localization), and why do they exist? (function).
2. It is one thing to address such questions, and another to do so neuropsychanalytically. What is special about the neuropsychanalytic approach?

This chapter was first presented orally as Solms, M. (2007), “What is the mind?”, at the 1st International Engineering & Neuro-Psychanalysis Forum, Vienna; and it was presented again in many other forums thereafter in substantially different versions. It was first published as Solms, M. (2007), “What is the ‘mind’? A neuro-psychoanalytical approach”, in the *Conference Proceedings: 1st International Engineering and Neuro-Psychanalysis Forum*, pp. 21-24; it was republished in a slightly revised version as Solms, M. (2008), “What is the ‘mind’? A neuro-psychoanalytical approach”, in D. Dietrich, G. Fodor, G. Zuckert, & D. Bruckner (Eds.), *Simulating the Mind: A Technical Neuropsychanalytical Approach* (Vienna: Springer), pp. 115-122.

The Brain and the Inner World

An introduction to the neuroscience of subjective experience

Mark Solms
Oliver Turnbull
Foreword by OLIVER SACKS

The Neuropsychology of Dreams

Mark Solms

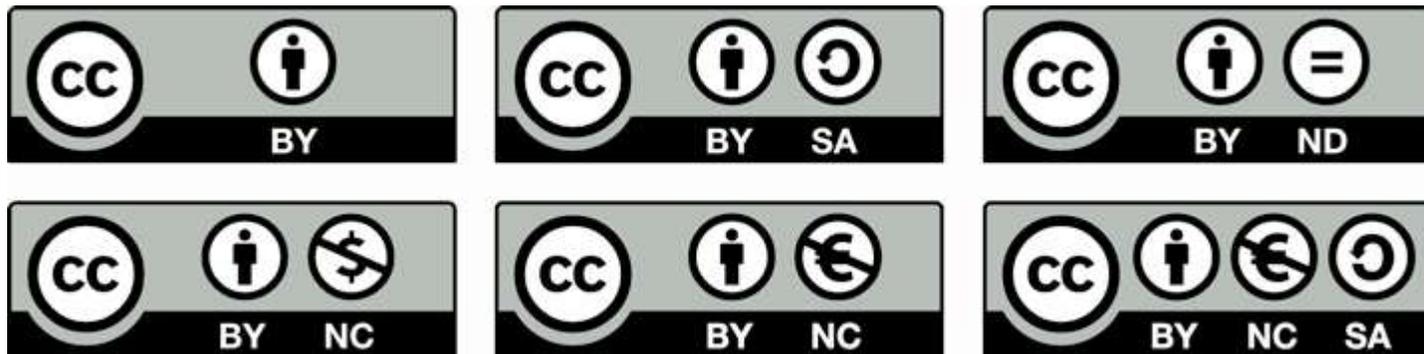
Mediating artefacts

1) MOOC design

learning design aspect

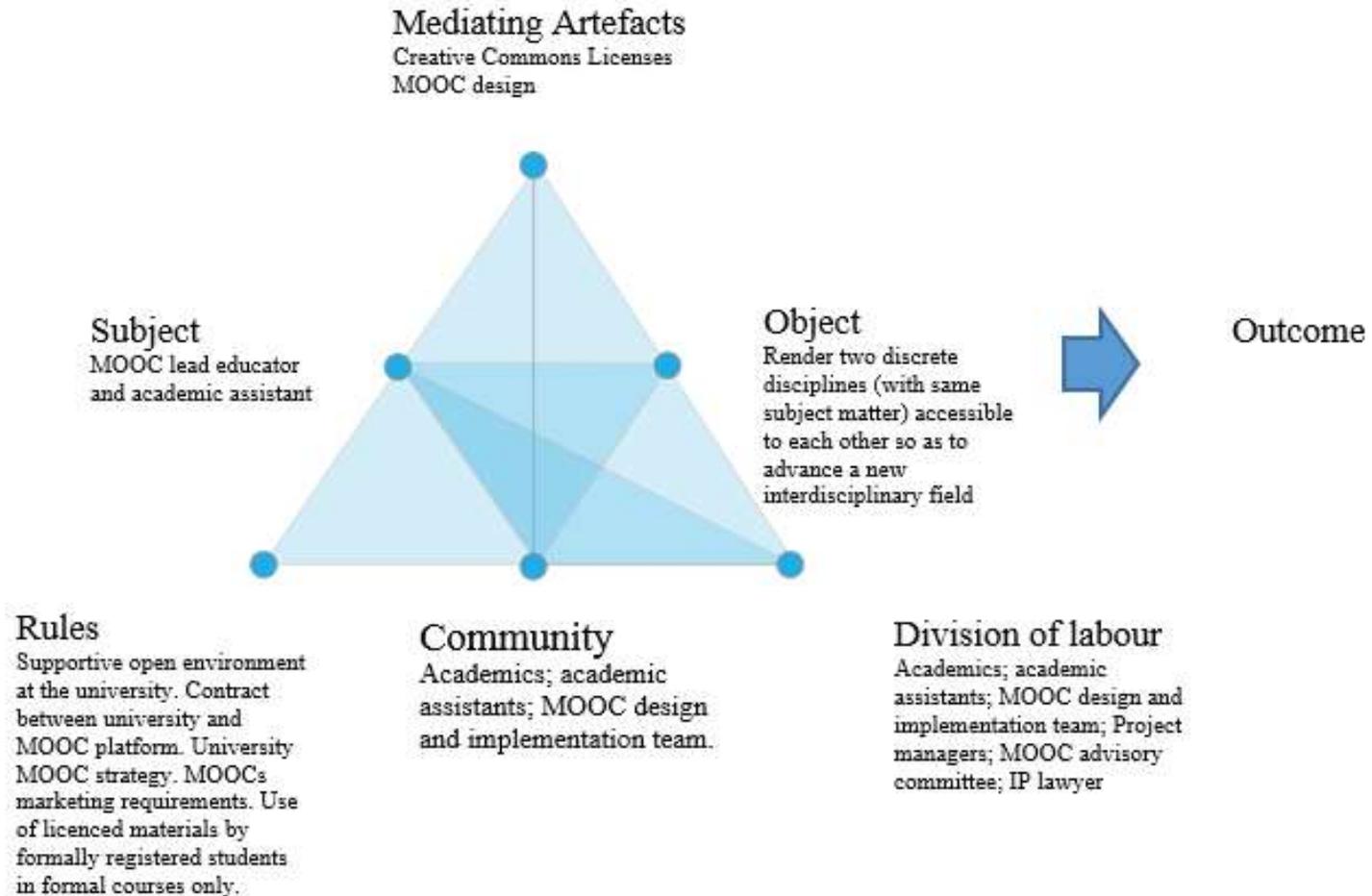
MOOC platform characteristics (e.g. 7 min video)

2) Creative Commons licences



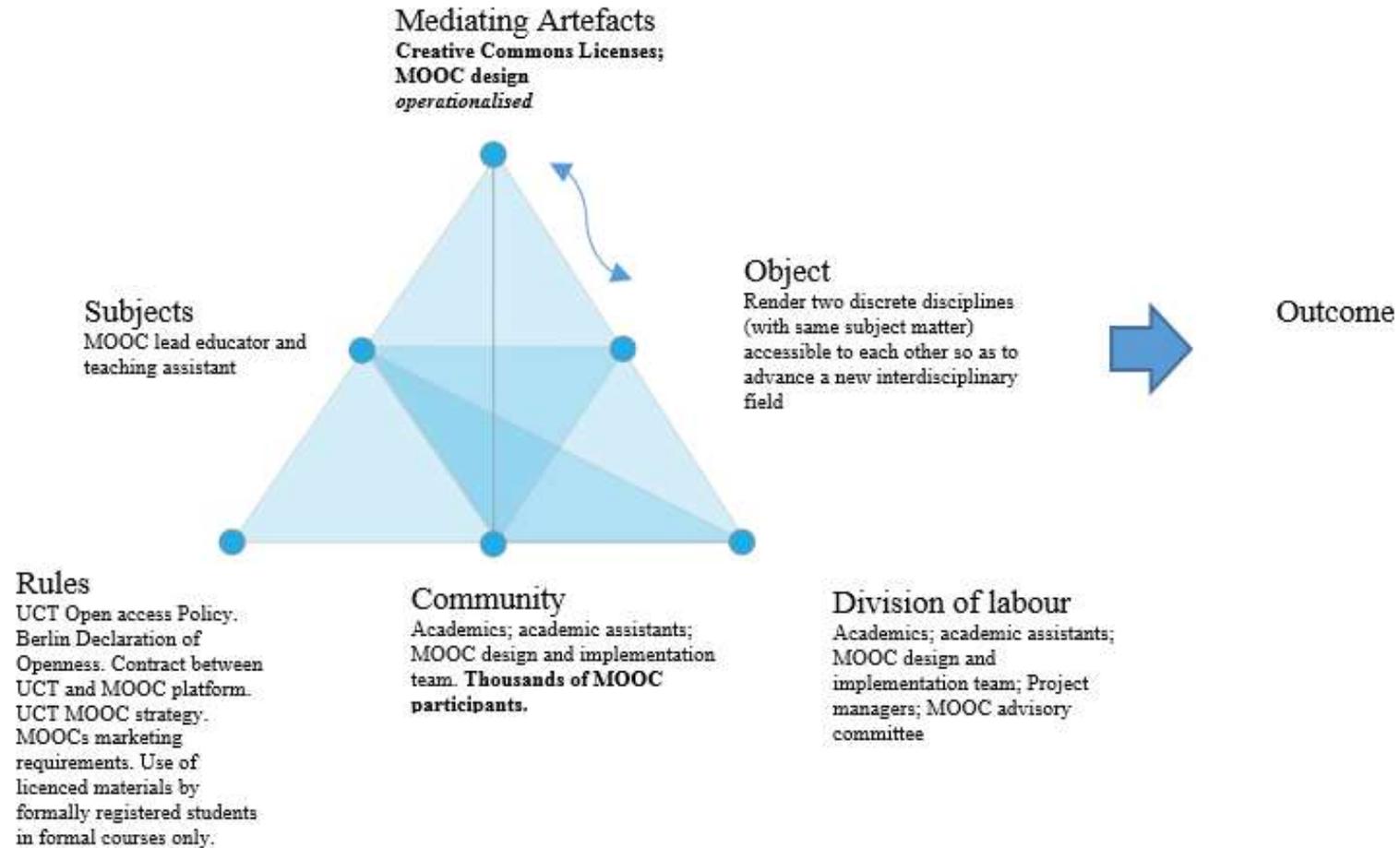
Activity System T1

Figure 1: WIAM MOOC at T1



Activity System T3

Figure 2: WIAM MOOC at T3



T1 is just before MOOC goes live

T3 is 10 months after MOOC has gone live

Difference in Activity Systems T1 & T3

1) Thousands of participants have entered the system

2) MOOC design and CC licensed materials now live and accessible

MOOCs and CC licences @ T1

Subjects had never taken or taught a MOOC

Not knowledgeable of CC licences or legal aspects of openness

“a dawning realisation that...the ownership of this intellectual property is antithetical to what we are trying to do”

Findings @ T1

Benefits of online open mode

- *Multimodal affordances*

“readings and additional materials” can be “immediately accessible”

You can see little case studies, and read selected publications...you could never do that as a mere human being (pedagogic openness)

Findings @ T1

Sharing, reuse, publicly accessible

the material is there, once it's open access, you can multiply [the] effect (reuse, opening up, sharing,)

if... they distribute that or use it, it's just more bang for your buck, (reuse, sharing)

"the more the merrier" (sharing, publicly accessible)

Findings @ T1

What is a Mind? – pedagogic strategy

you with a point of entry into the more technical, complicated aspects

remove resistances by making it simple, conversational, and of general applicability

What happens 10 months later (T3) ?

Findings @ T3

Advancing the field

really everywhere I go in the world I'm surprised at how many people A, have taken this course, and B, have appreciated it.

very few people in this specialised sub-field that I'm working in, neuro-psychoanalysis there are very few people who really can teach in that domain now... This has taught me, and encouraged me, to use online platforms for teaching people in and about that field.

Findings @ T3

Reuse

Something...you've recorded for one purpose can then be redeployed for another purpose (e.g Talking Heads project)

[a professor of psychiatry at the University of Arizona] used it as an introductory seminar for his psychiatry registrars.

[Ask Mark] too much of a good resource to waste (assistant)

Findings @ T3

Teaching and Learning in Open networks

clearly getting a message across to those disparate audiences

clarity of thought...to convey complex...things to a non-technical, non-specialist audience (pedagogic, audience)

you have to really pare your ideas down to the core essential content

When you have to teach in that way, it clarifies your own thinking process

Findings @ T3

Teaching and Learning in Open networks

Talking Heads project is taking an entirely different shape...because of what we've learnt in the MOOC (reuse)

I would say the vast bulk of what we do, especially at undergraduate level at the university, I don't see why it can't be done in this format. I don't even see why it can't be enhanced by this format. Or versions of this format. So I'm all for it. That's speaking about it in general

Conclusion

Advancing the field

Include more learners

Real learning can take place

Multimodal affordances

Reuse

Learn to communicate ideas

Hope for a future use at UCT?

References

Beetham, H., Falconer, I., McGill, L. and Littlejohn, A. (2012) Open practices: briefing paper. JISC.

Engestrom, Yrjo. "Learning by expanding." *Helsinki: Orienta-Konsultit Oy*(1987).

Hodgkinson-Williams, C. *Degrees of ease: Adoption of OER, Open Textbooks and MOOCs in the Global South* OER Asia Symposium 2014.



Talking Head

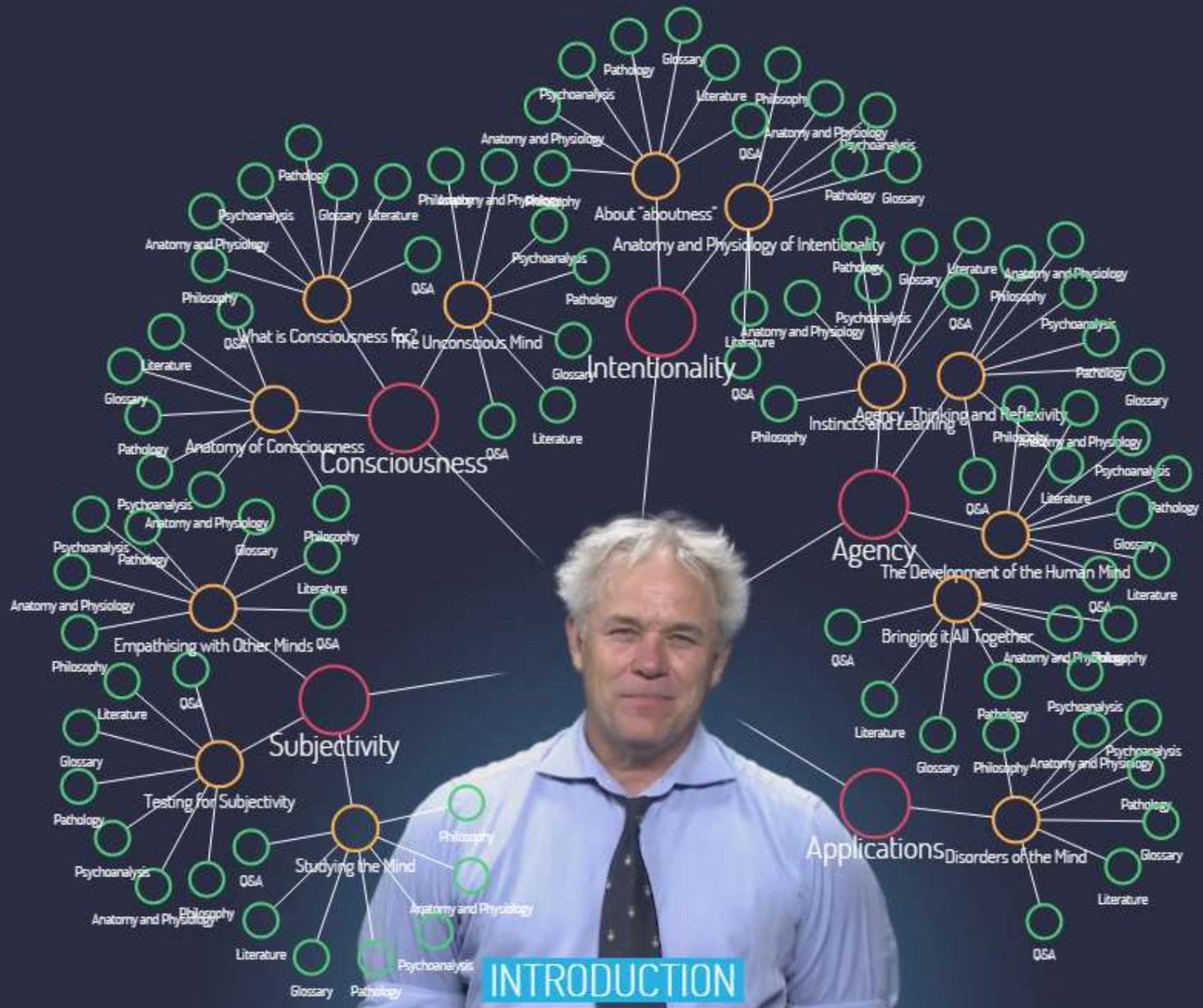
What is a mind?

An interactive audiovisual introduction to the mind

BY MARK SOLMS

[START EXPERIENCE](#)

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INTRODUCTION