



MOOCs, educators and learning designers in UK HE

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Overview

- Socio-technical approach – Social Informatics
- MOOCs operate in a ‘3rd space’ across academic and professional boundaries
- Learning Designers are central and other seemingly peripheral actors are influential

MOOCs as 'change agents'

- Openness and access
- Structure of HE
- Teaching and learning in HE

The connection between MOOCs and educator and learning designer roles and practices is under-researched

(Liyanagunawardena et al., 2013; Najafi et al., 2015; Veletsianos & Shephard, 2016)

Problem: Conflating the social and technical



Highlighting co-construction

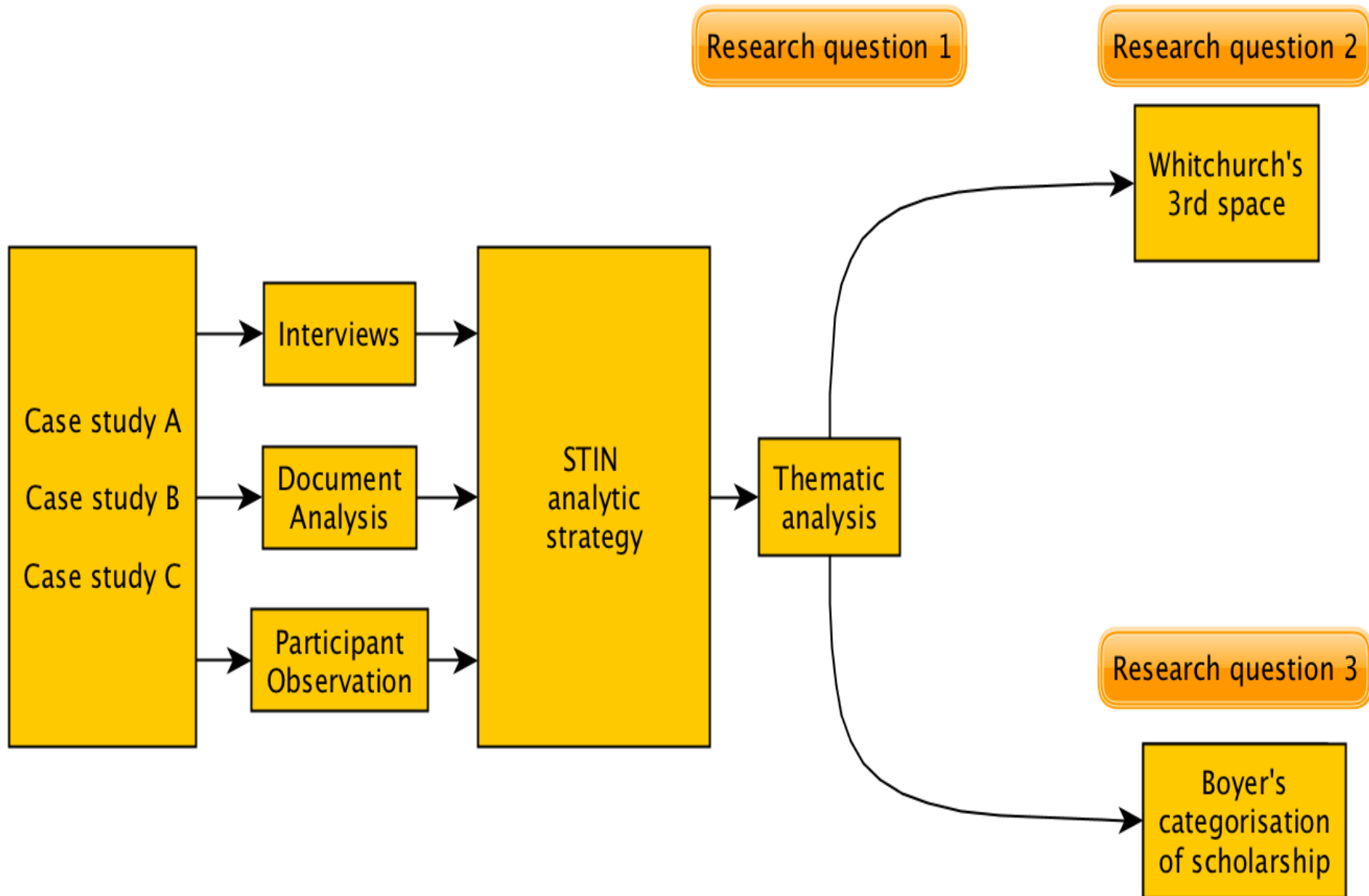
There is a blindness to the mutually constitutive interaction of technologies and practices in many studies of education

Brown (2016)

Research question

To what extent does involvement in MOOC development influence the roles and practices of educators and learning designers in particular HE institutions?

Overview of the study



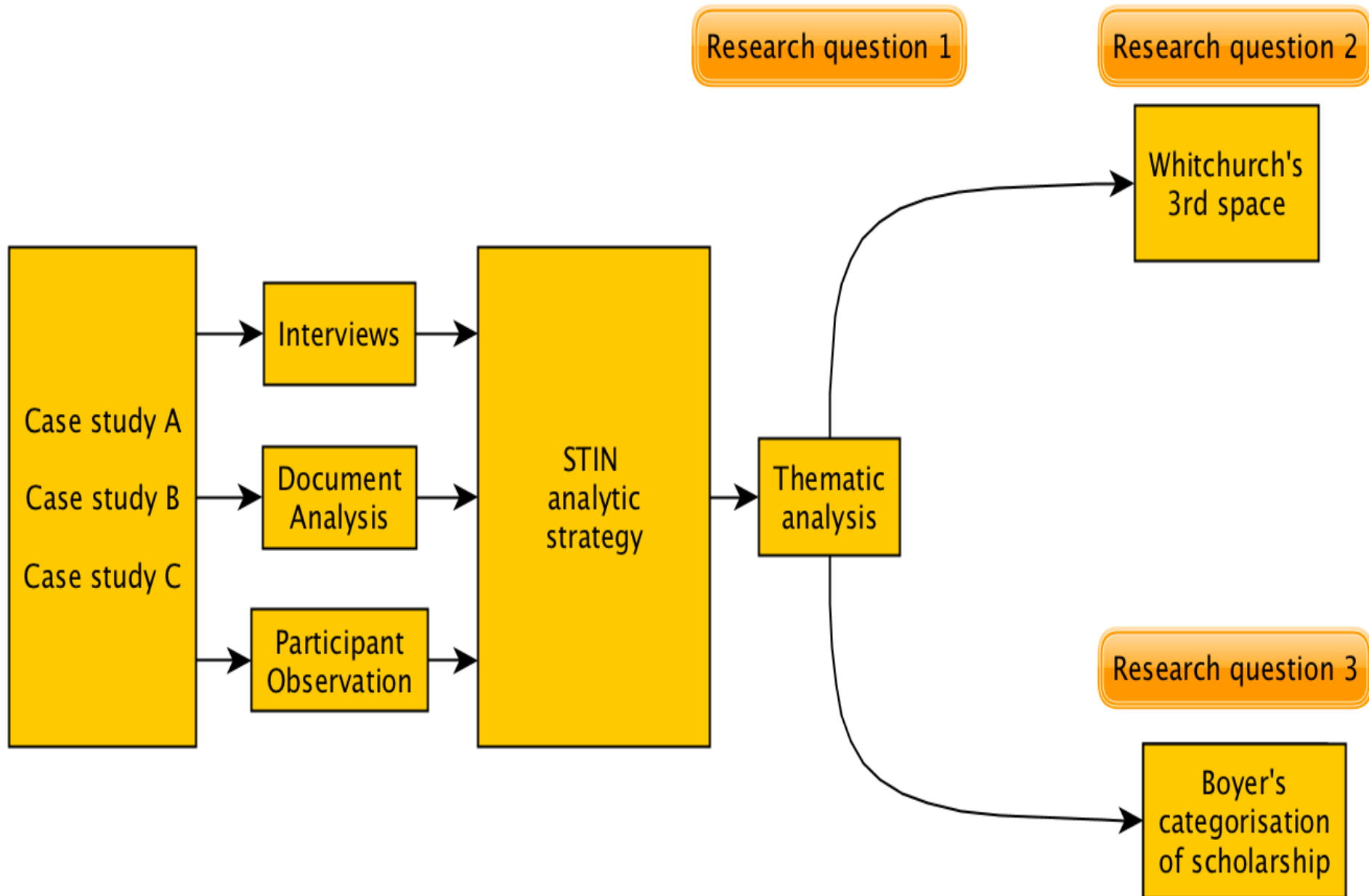
Sub-questions focus on:

1. MOOC production socio-technical systems
2. Educator and Learning Designer roles
3. Educator and Learning Designer practices

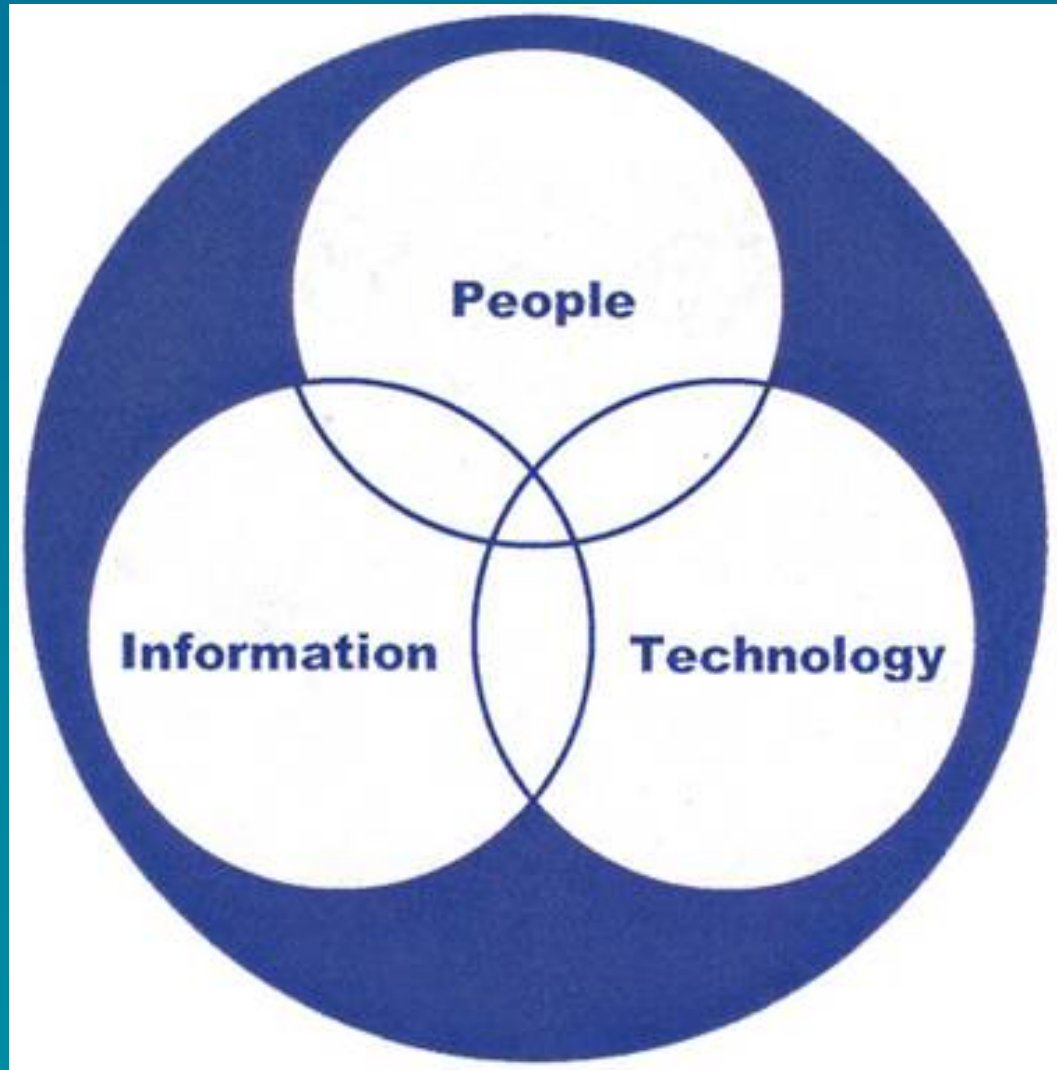
Progress of case study research

Research stage	
Pilot interviews	✓
University A	✓
University B	
University C	
Comparative analysis/ writing up	

Overview of the study

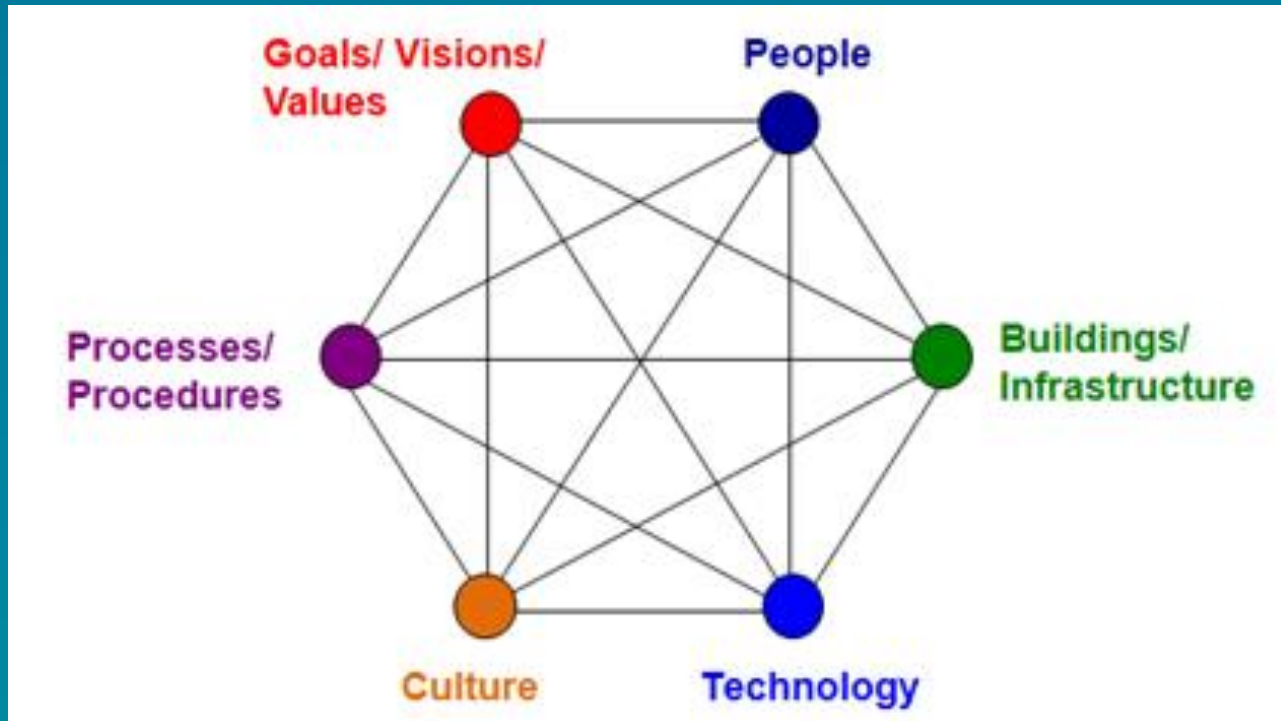


Social informatics



(Penniman, 2005)

Socio-Technical Interaction Networks (STIN)



(Challenger et al., 2010)

STIN – a definition

“a network that includes people, equipment, data, diverse resources, documents and messages, legal arrangements, enforcement mechanisms, and resource flows”

(Kling et al., 2003:48)

STIN research steps (1)

Identify:

- relevant system interactors
- core interactor groups
- incentives/pressures
- excluded actors/undesired actions

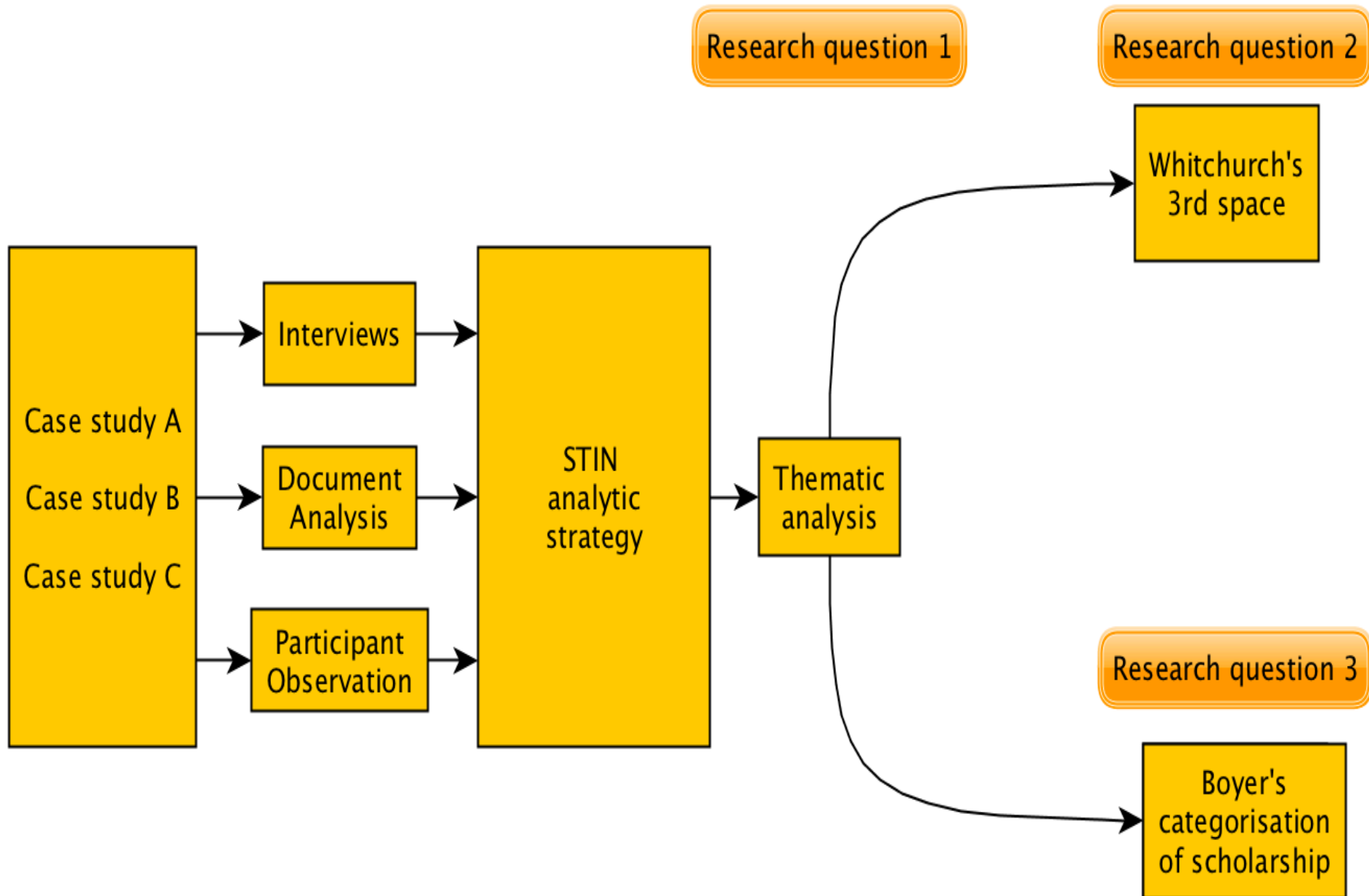
(Kling et al., 2003)

STIN research steps (2)

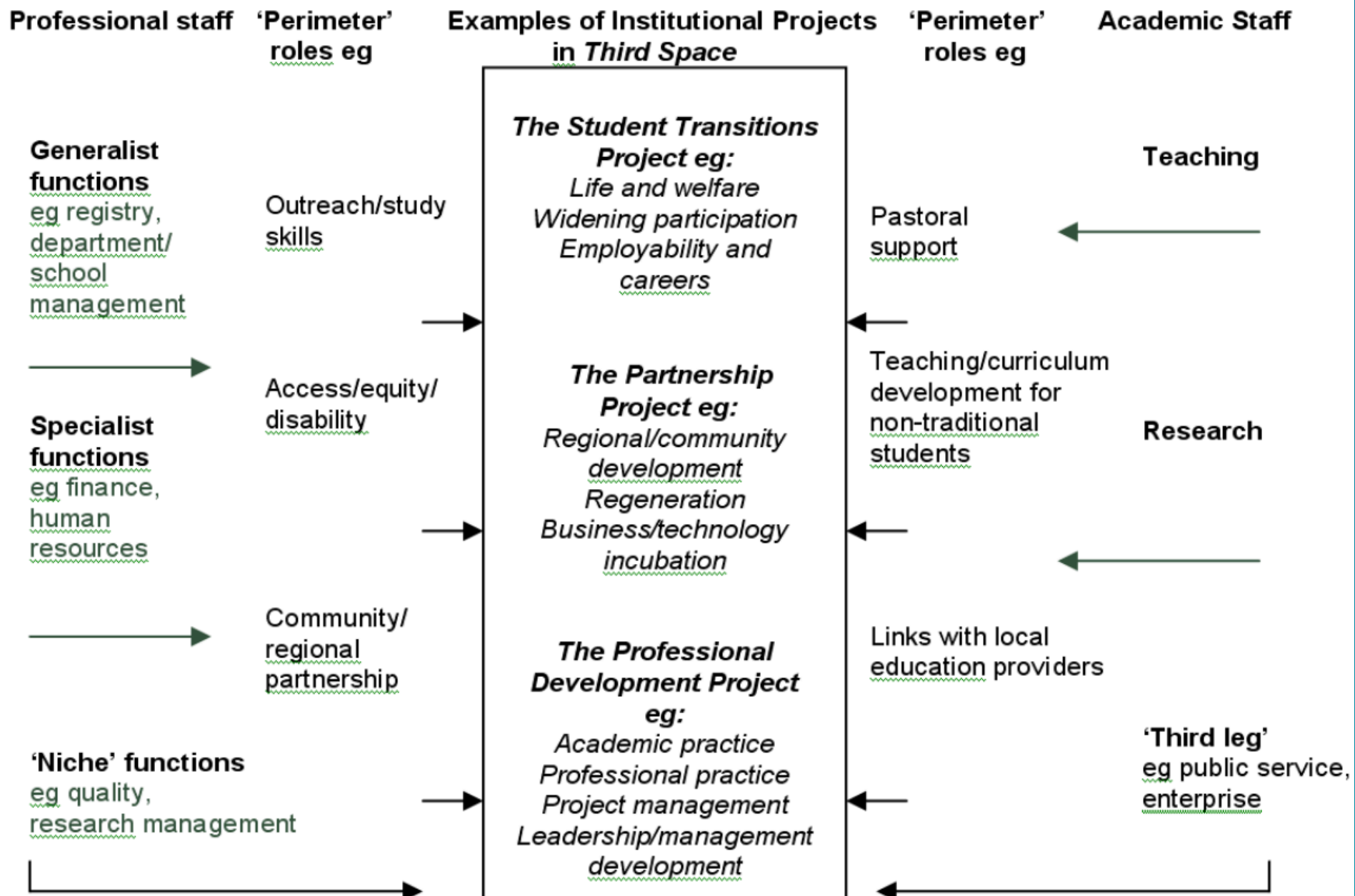
- existing communication forums
- resource flows
- system architectural choice points
- Map architectural choice points to socio-technical characteristics

(Kling et al., 2003)

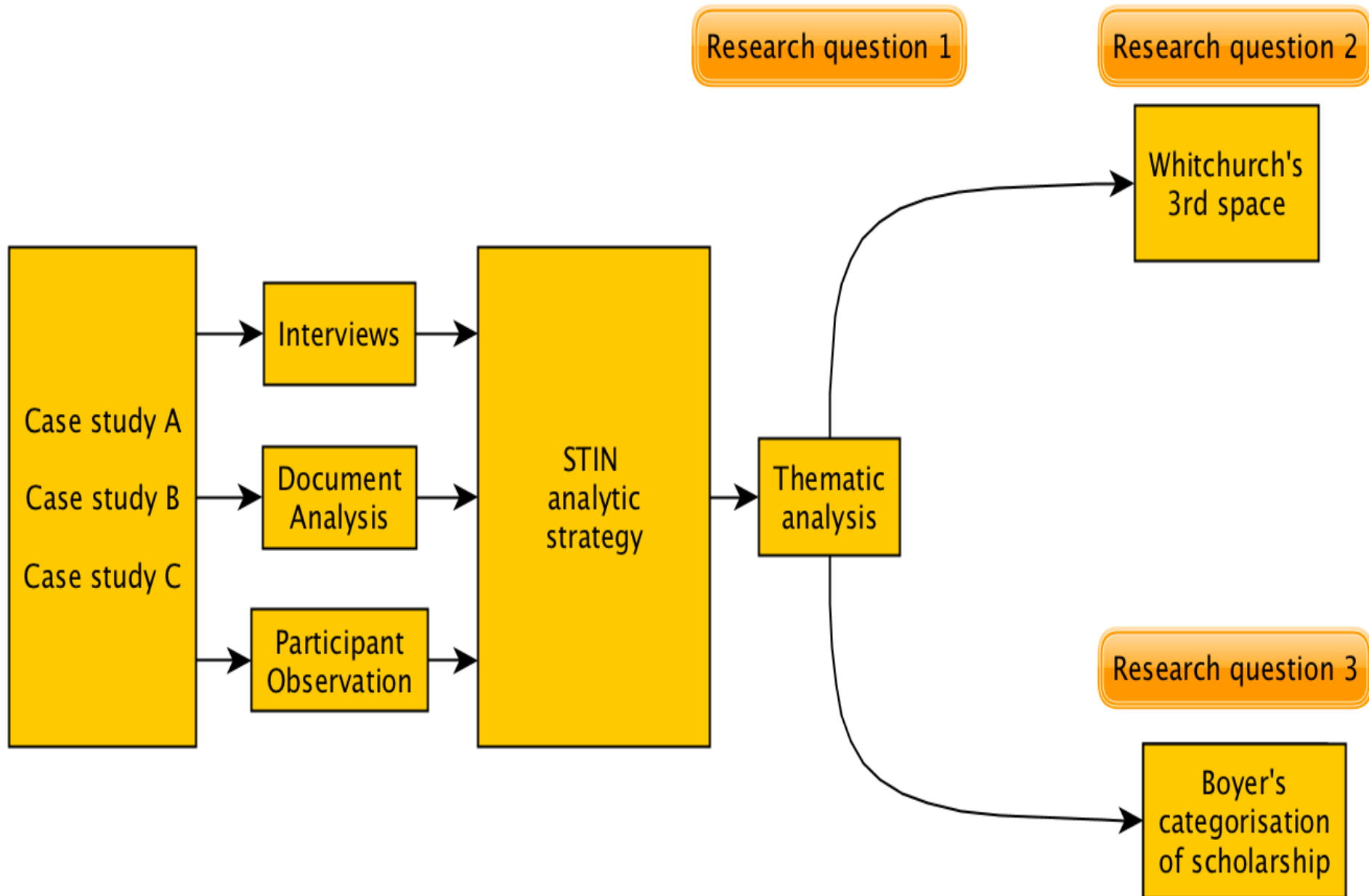
Overview of the study



Whitchurch's '3rd Space' (2008)



Overview of the study

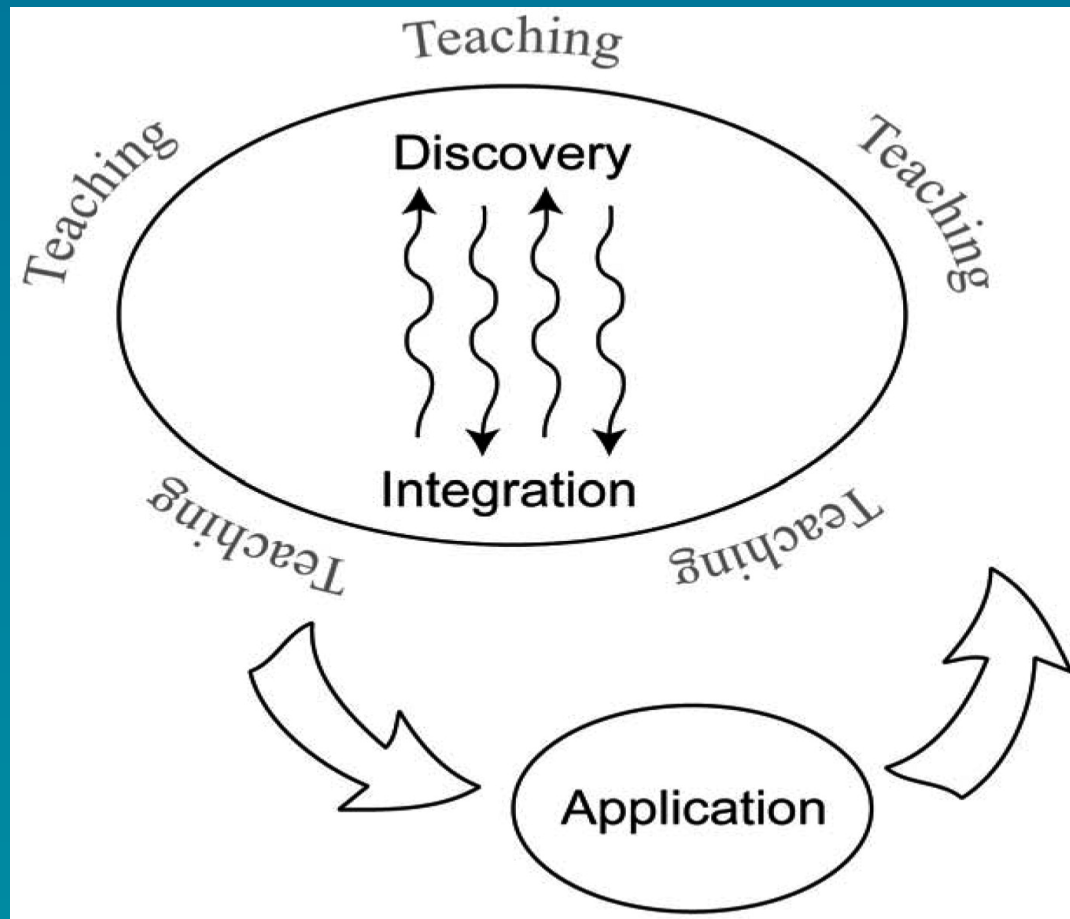


Elements of scholarship



Boyer (1990)

Interaction of elements of scholarship

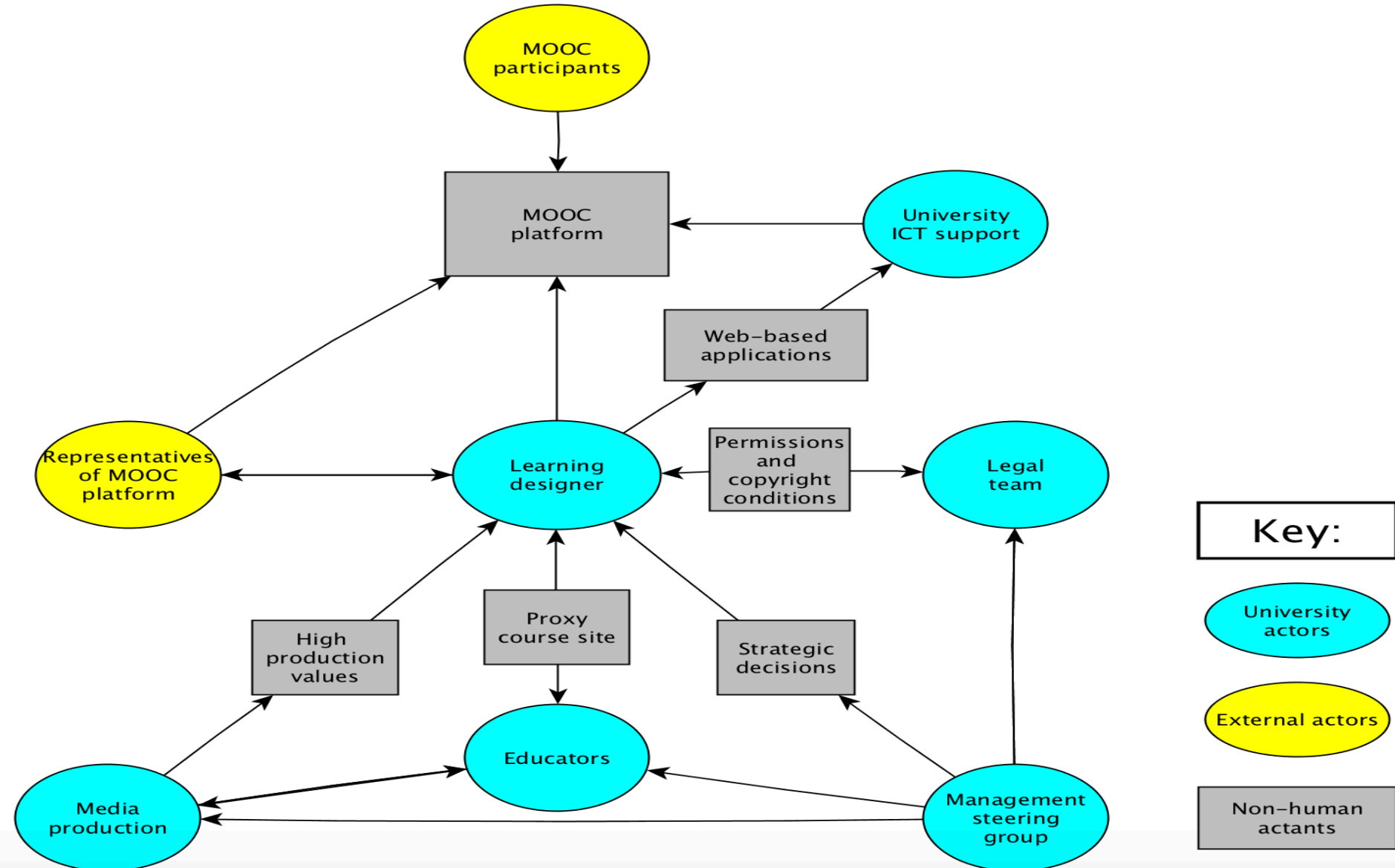


Boshier (2009)

Findings and discussion

- MOOCs operate within a 3rd space context
- Learning designers occupy a central, hub-like position in MOOC development
- Seemingly peripheral actors in MOOC development influence course design, technical configurations, and content selection

STIN diagram of MOOC development Uni A



“[name of LD] was “the linchpin” for the project

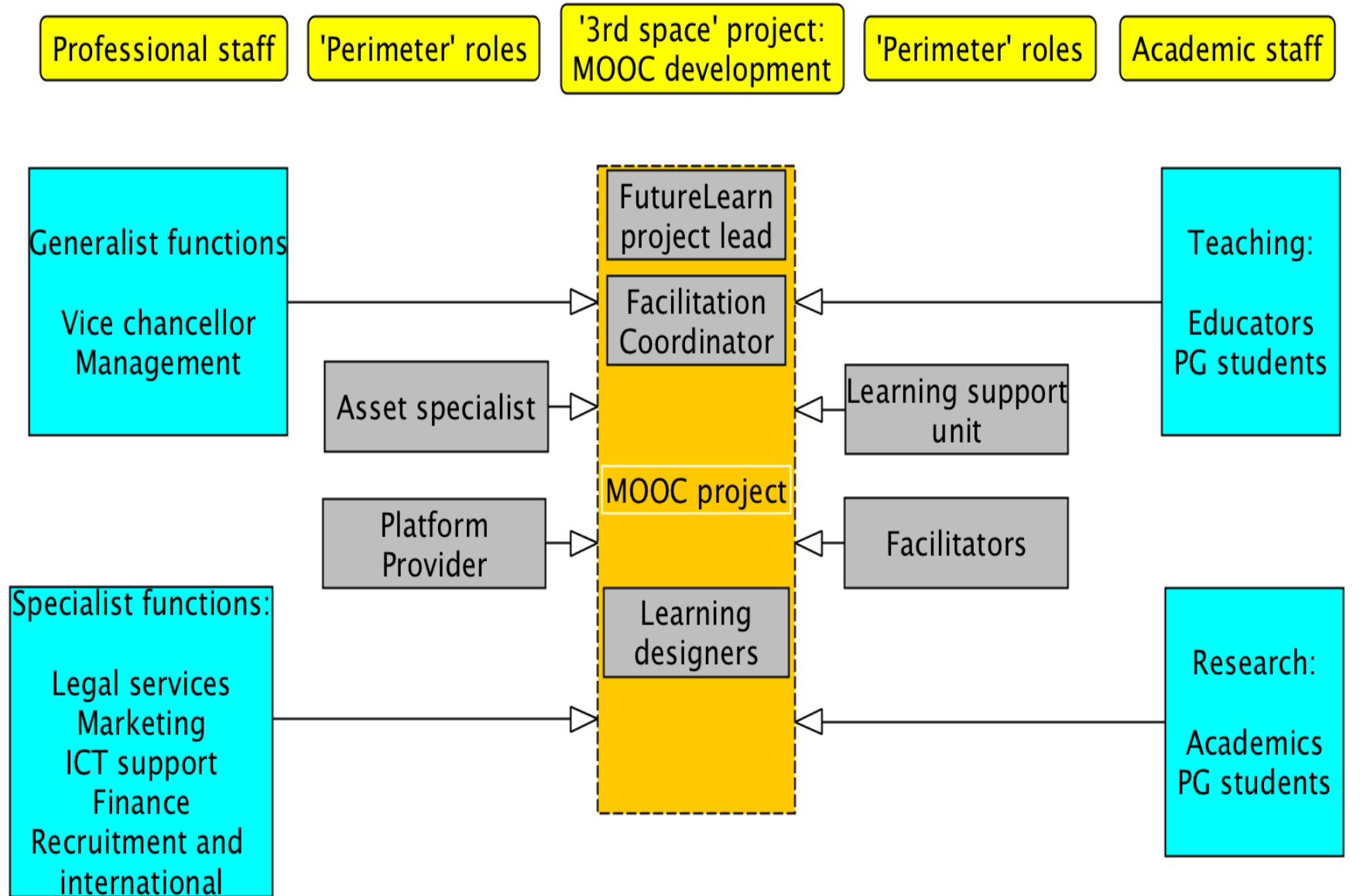
Educators perceive the relationship as one of “co-creation”, albeit one in which LDs implicitly retain “the final say”

LDs limit educator access to the platform –
placing themselves as filter of content

“the emergence of broadly-based, extended projects across the university, which are no longer containable within firm boundaries, [and which] have created new portfolios of activity”

(Whitchurch, 2013: 25)

MOOCs as 3rd space activities

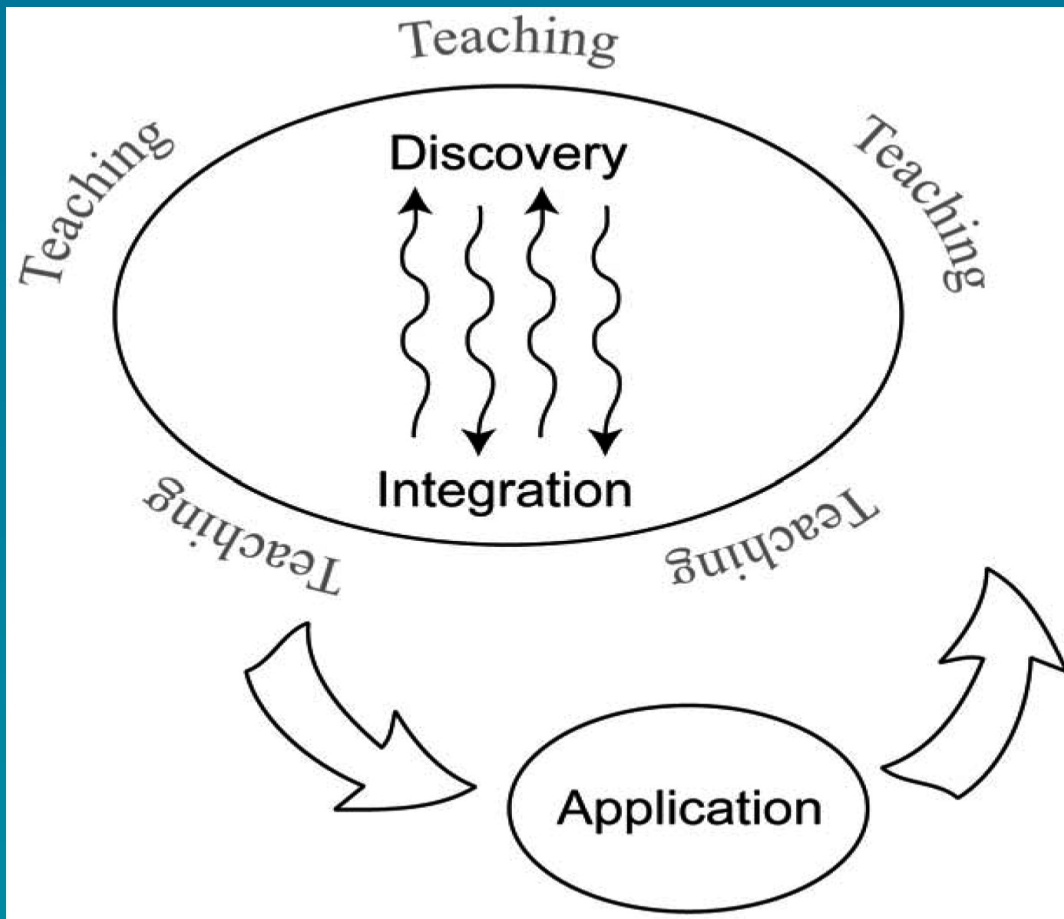


Educator practices and MOOCs



Boyer (1990)

Educator practices and MOOCs



“we can
spread the word”

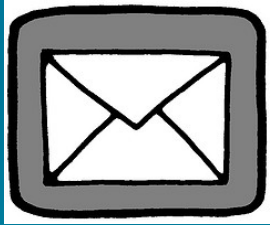
“provide thought
leadership through
research-lead
teaching”

Evaluation

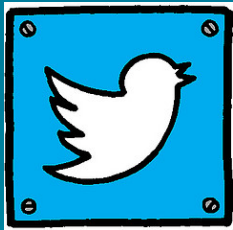
- STIN is useful for a systems view of MOOC development
- MOOCs fit the 3rd space model, but STIN adds a concern with co-construction
- High degree of contingency in considering embeddedness alongside co-construction

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MOOC Observatory

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