

# **Orchestrating the Student Experience with Social Media Tools**

[http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/dcspaul/  
publications/ptas-cisa.pdf](http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/dcspaul/publications/ptas-cisa.pdf)

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A PTAS funded project - <http://edin.ac/14wOyMP>

# Project Aims

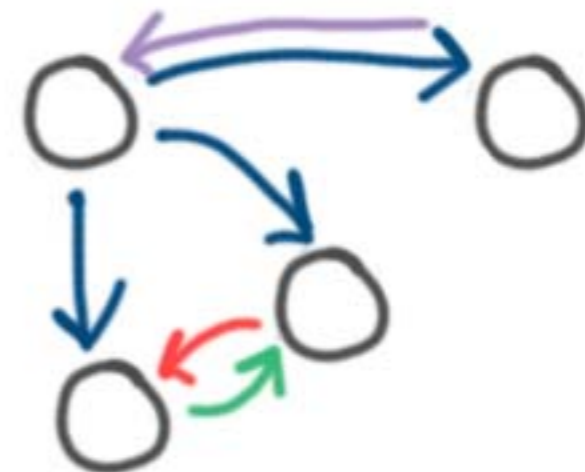
- ▶ What social media and related tools are people using in the University to support their teaching ?
- ▶ How are these being used ?
- ▶ What are the common general issues ?
- ▶ (How) are they being used to facilitate explicit types of interaction ?

**“How can I choose a tool, and find a mode of using it, which will satisfy my pedagogical aims?”**

It can be difficult to identify an appropriate tool (or a mode of using such a tool) to meet specific pedagogic aims - sometimes the natural use of a particular tool is a good fit, and sometimes it needs creative abuse to make it fit

# Interactions

- ▶ Is it helpful to think about, and encourage specific interactions among students?
- ▶ Can we classify the interactions supported by different social media tools?
- ▶ If so, would this be useful in identifying different tools which may be helpful in particular situations?
- ▶ Are there some useful interaction models which are not well supported by any existing tools?



# What Are People Using?

**We interviewed 12 staff members from across the University, with a wide range of experience in online tool use**

- ▶ Semi-structured interviews
- ▶ Loose identification of themes/trends
- ▶ Workshop to discuss results

## **What, how & why ?**

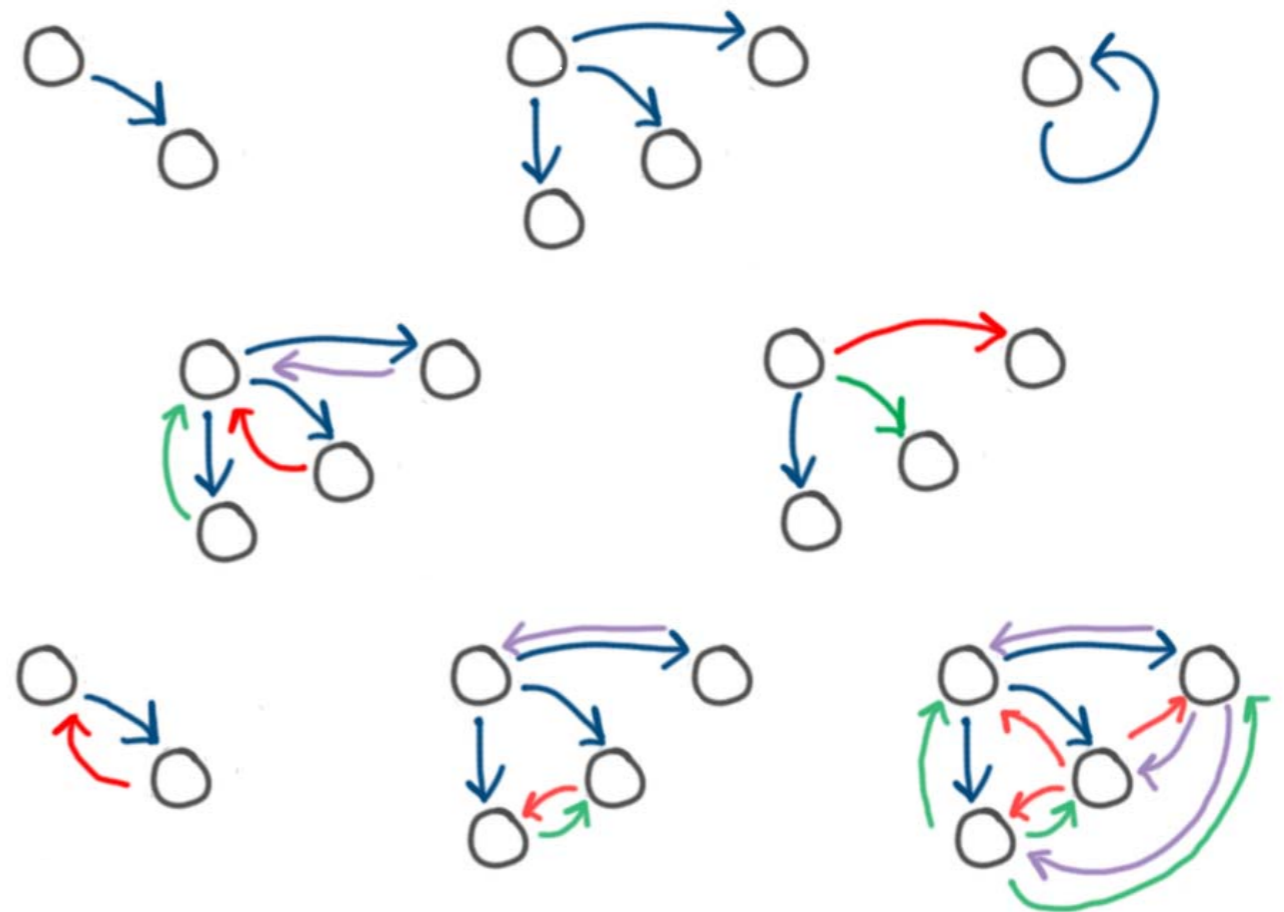
- ▶ What tools do people use & why & how?
- ▶ Do people have an explicit pedagogical aim for any of these uses?
- ▶ What works & what doesn't? what are the problems?
- ▶ Is there anything people would like to do, which they haven't been able to do?

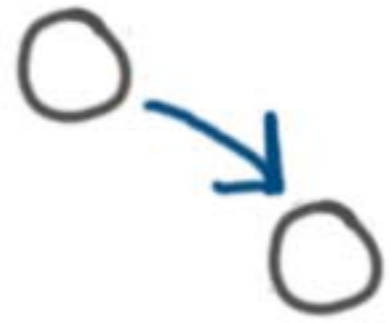
Tool	Veterinary (U-PG)	Education (PG)	SPS (U-PG)	Maths (UG)	Business (U-PG)	Geoscience (U-PG)	LLC (UG)	Biology (UG)	Medicine (PG)	Law (U-PG)	ECA (U-PG)
Physical tools	UG		UG	UG	PG	UG	UG	UG	PG	PG	U-PG
Clickers	UG		UG	UG		UG		UG			
VLE	PG	PG	U-PG	UG	U-PG	U-PG	UG	UG			U-PG
Blogging	PG	PG	UG			U-PG	UG				U-PG
Twitter	PG	PG	UG	UG	PG	PG		PG	PG	U-PG	U-PG
Facebook	PG	PG	UG			U-PG	UG	UG		UG	U-PG
LinkedIn					PG	PG					PG
Skype	PG	PG			Pre-entry						
Googledocs/hangout/grp	PG	PG			PG	PG	UG				U-PG
Second life	PG	PG									
Pinterest/wallwisher	PG		UG					UG			U-PG
Wikis	PG	PG		UG				UG			
Online tests	U-PG			UG						PG	
Own software					U-PG	PG	UG	UG	PG		U-PG

# Classifying Interactions

**We attempted a very simple classification the interactions described in the interviews**

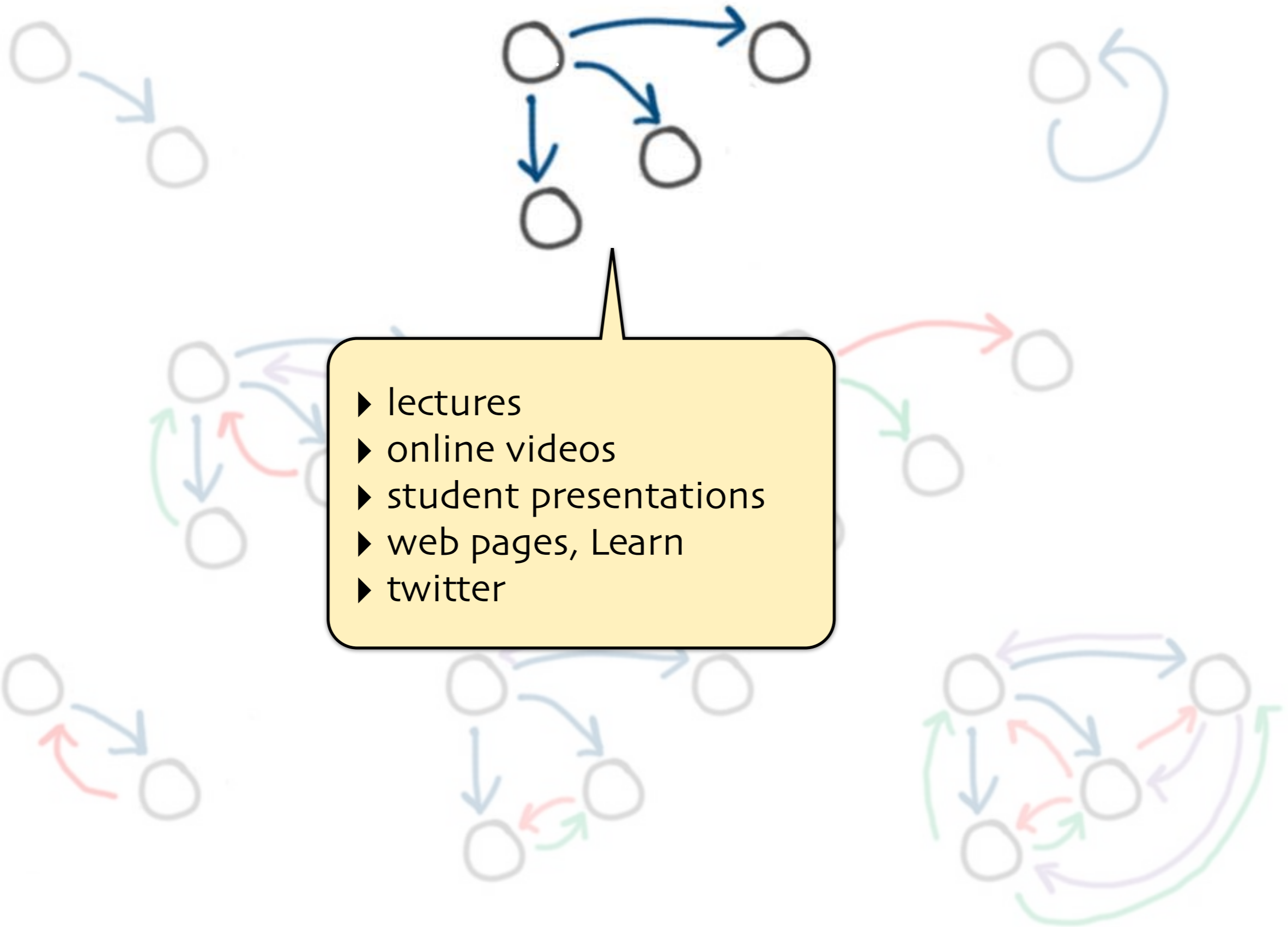
- ▶ who is communicating with who, in what order?
- ▶ no analysis of message content





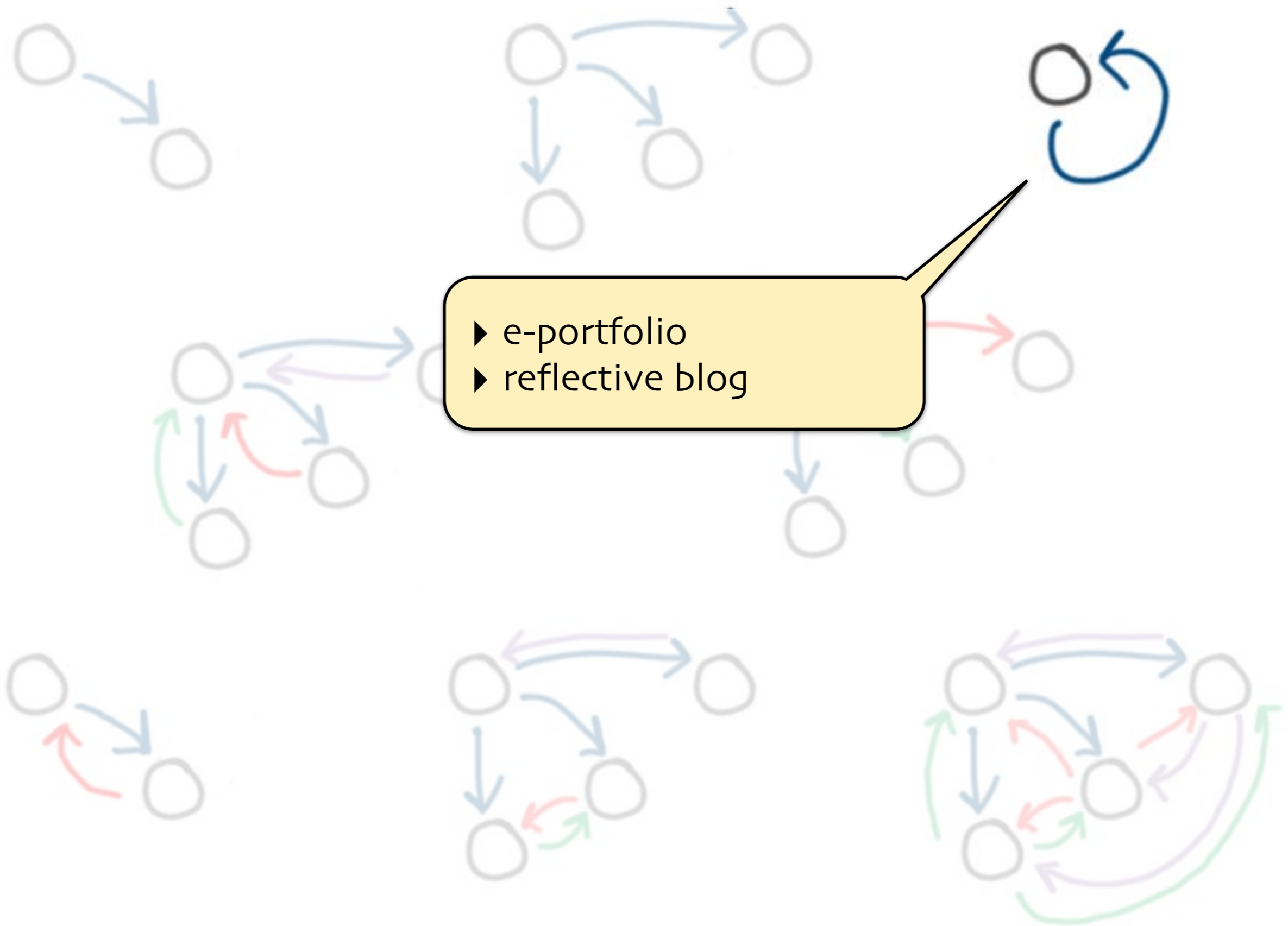
- ▶ email
- ▶ private blogs viewed by tutor
- ▶ assignment submissions

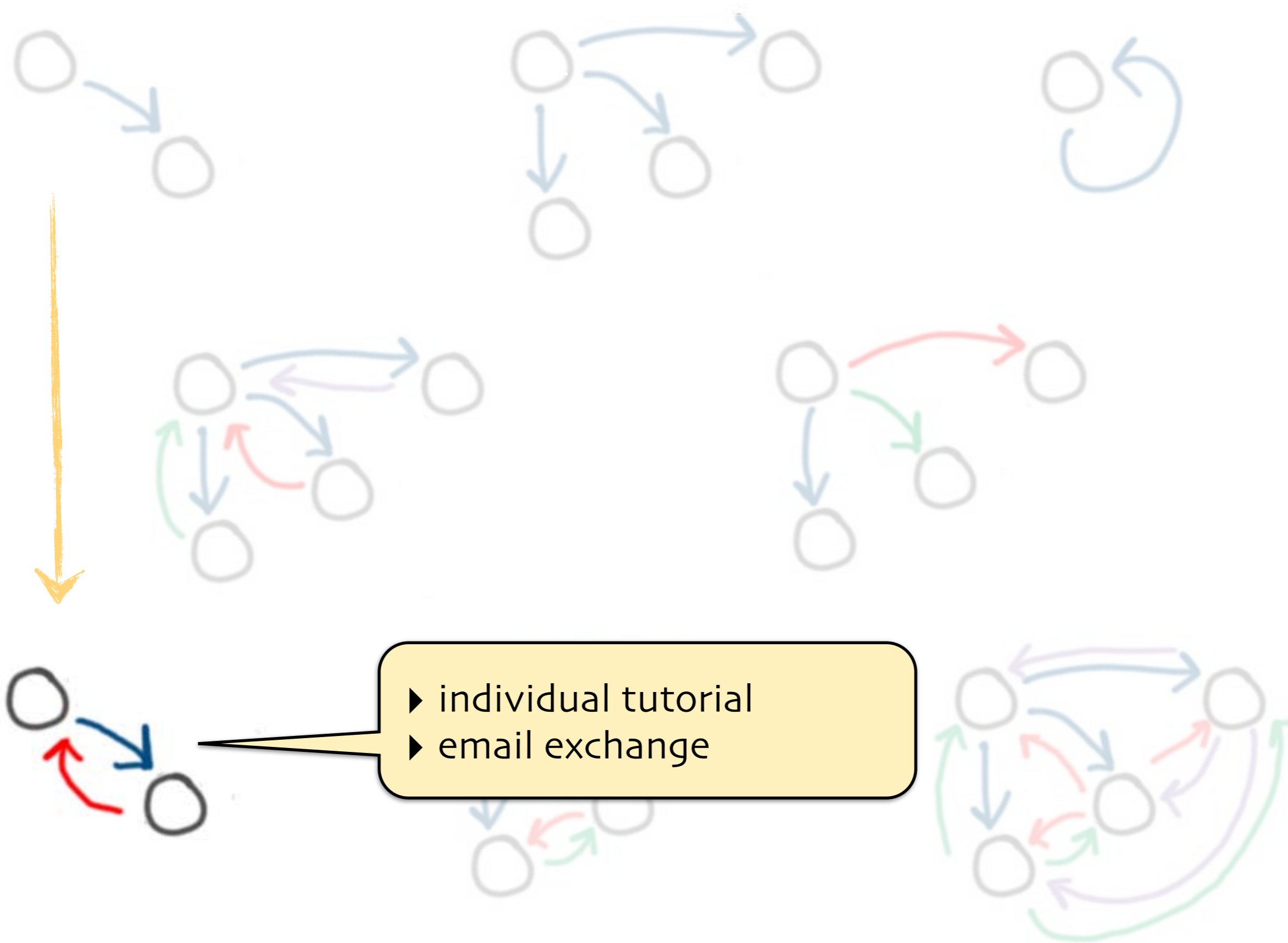


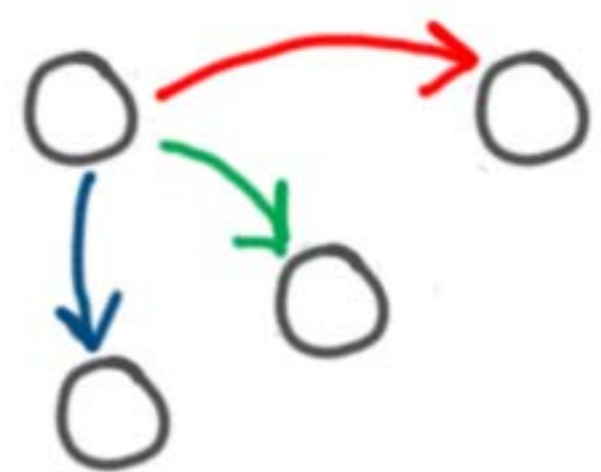


- ▶ lectures
- ▶ online videos
- ▶ student presentations
- ▶ web pages, Learn
- ▶ twitter

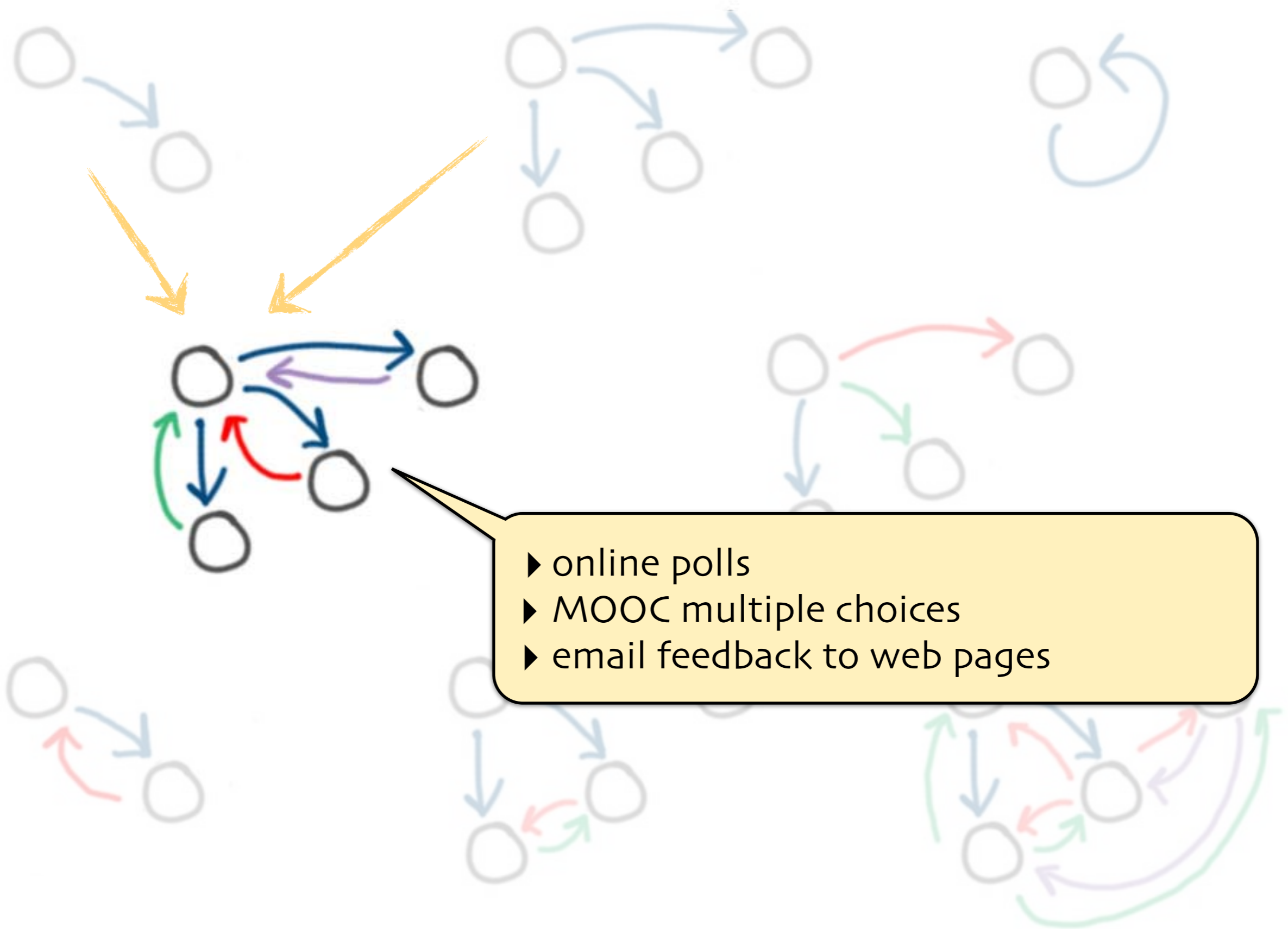




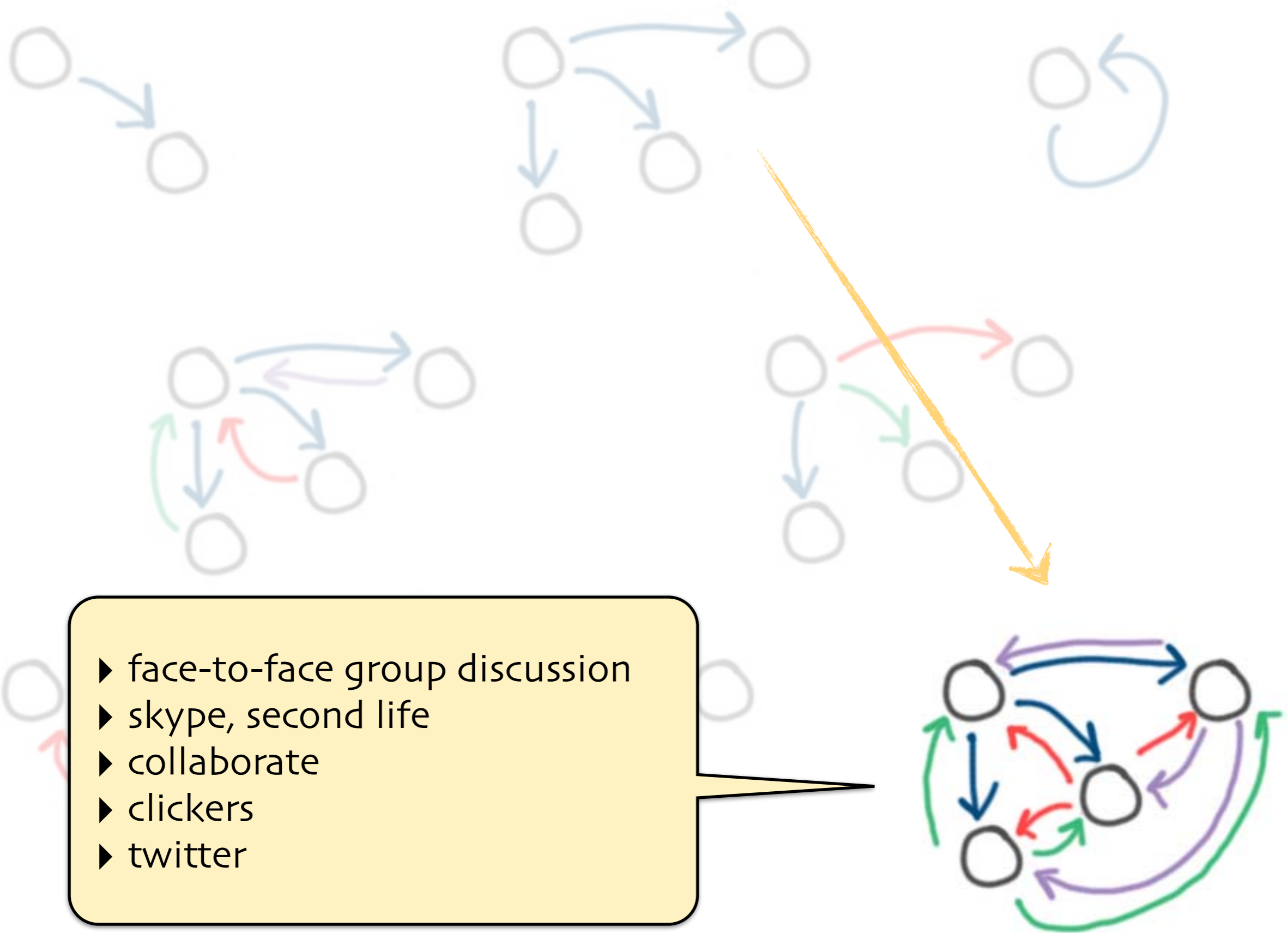




► individual feedback  
(to or from the student)



- ▶ online polls
- ▶ MOOC multiple choices
- ▶ email feedback to web pages



- ▶ face-to-face group discussion
- ▶ skype, second life
- ▶ collaborate
- ▶ clickers
- ▶ twitter

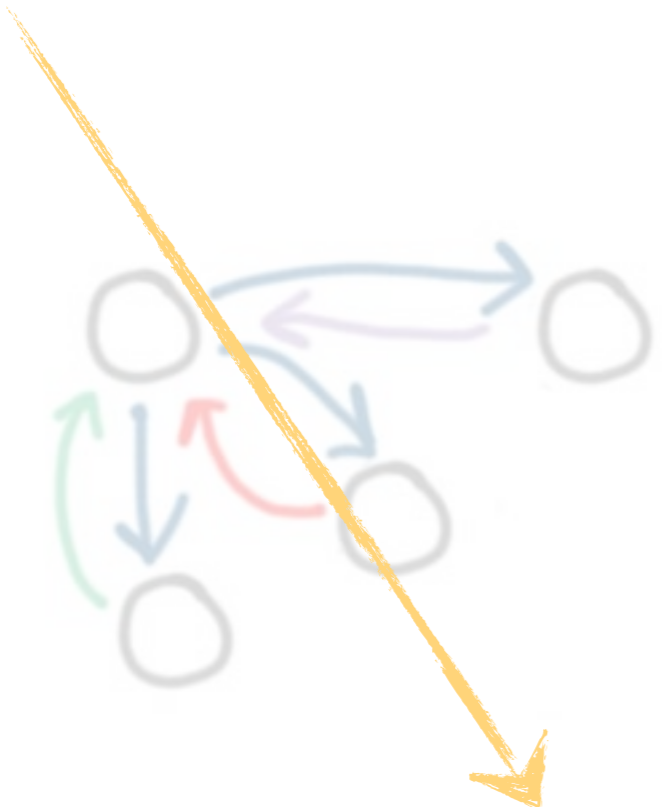
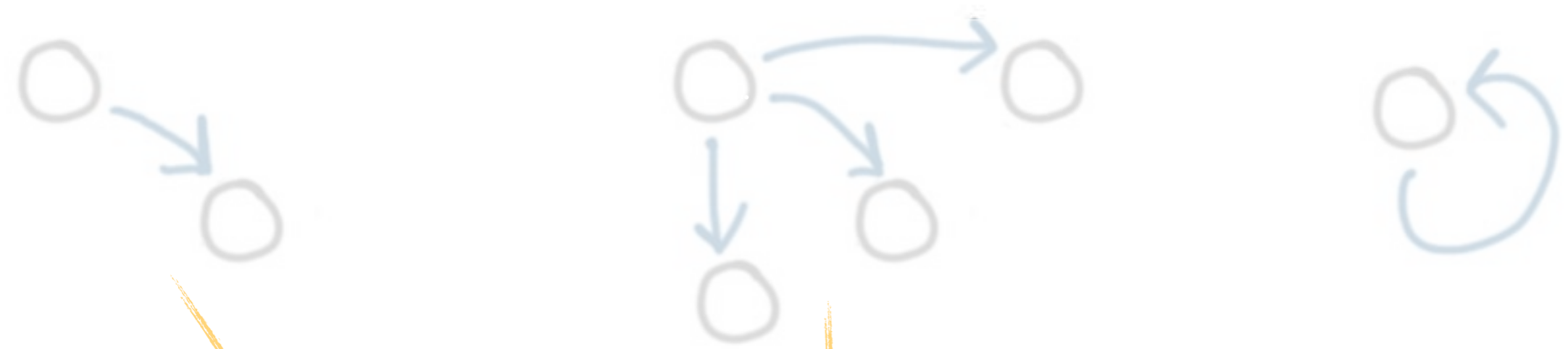
# Compound Interactions

## **There were quite a few cases of more complex procedures**

- ▶ These are usually sequential compositions of individual interactions

## **For example ...**

- ▶ Students prepare material which is presented and discussed at a tutorial. They then use the feedback to prepare an assignment which is submitted for assessment
- ▶ A closed collaborative wiki is used by groups of students to develop shared material. This is later made “open” to external comments



# Non-functional Aspects

## **Synchronous?**

- ▶ Does everyone need to be present at the same time?

## **Persistent?**

- ▶ Do the contents remain visible indefinitely? (snapchat)

## **Anonymous?**

- ▶ Is the poster anonymous ?

## **Fluent?**

- ▶ Is there a significant latency?



# Is This A Useful Perspective?

**There were very few cases where someone articulated a clear vision of an interaction which they explicitly wanted to initiate**

- ▶ This makes it difficult to evaluate how useful this perspective is in designing interactions to meet a particular objective

**But ...**

- ▶ Feedback suggests that this can be a helpful way of thinking about tool use
- ▶ Other tools which perform a similar interaction may be useful alternatives

**Is it worth a deeper analysis**

- ▶ Of message content? Or sequencing?
- ▶ I don't know!

# Other Issues

## **Time & Effort**

- ▶ Is it worth the time to investigate/learn/develop?  
for both staff and students?
- ▶ Learning multiple, constantly changing tools is not efficient  
tools can change quickly, requiring significant effort to keep up

## **Cultural or personal attitudes/preferences**

- ▶ Some people have a natural tendency to share things (or not)

## **Privacy, Anonymity & Data Protection ...**

## **Internal vs External Systems ...**

# Privacy & Anonymity

## **Students prefer to keep separate personal & work spaces**

- ▶ eg. on Facebook
- ▶ This may lead to “exclusion” and other issues

## **Anonymity is an important consideration**

- ▶ Can encourage people to participate (Peerwise? Wordpress aliases?)
- ▶ But can also be abused (Twitter?)

## **Accidental bleed between public & private spaces**

- ▶ Lack of clarity about (eg.) staff membership of Facebook groups
- ▶ Postings on private Wordpress site then discussed in public Facebook

## **Tools are often deployed without a very explicit consideration of these issues**

- ▶ Google hangouts posting discussions to uTube

# Internal vs External Systems

## **Internal systems are good ...**

- ▶ Access is restricted and students (and staff!) are not so exposed
- ▶ They provide data protection, and protection of ideas (copyright)
- ▶ We have some control over the availability and stability

## **Internal systems are not so good ...**

- ▶ The privacy is unclear because staff have access and control
- ▶ Access is unavailable after students graduate
- ▶ It may not be easy to provide access for (eg.) external examiners, or job interviewers
- ▶ The need for stability and the lack of effort means that services usually lag behind those available externally

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