Delivering a CU SPRINT: A Facilitators Guide

Coventry University
Disruptive Media Learning Lab
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Background and Overview:

The CU SPRINT is a rapid prototyping exercise based on the **Google Ventures (GV) Sprint** methodology. Leveraging design thinking principles, the **four-day CU SPRINT** is designed specifically for accelerated design, development, and viability testing of Higher Education courses. Starting with the ideal graduate and building upwards, by the end of the process course documentation should be complete, the assessment strategy should be mapped, and a teaching and learning strategy completed.

To date, the CU SPRINT process has been used to design numerous courses at Coventry University at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The tired and tested methodology follows a rigid process to support development of innovative, high quality courses fit for modern higher educational practice.

Expectations of Facilitators:

The purpose of the CU SPRINT is to rapidly develop the ideas of the course team. This means each participant must to be willing to follow a common set of guidelines designed to make the process as efficient and effective as possible. As the facilitator, it is your role to make sure these rules are followed.

- **Willingness to compromise**. There will be spaces in which participants disagree with some of the ideas proposed. We encourage them to argue their point, however compromise will usually be inevitable at some point in the process.

- **Attendance**. The CU SPRINT runs over four solid days, with an optional fifth day. Each section focuses on a different element and in order to get the most out of the process participants need to be involved in all sections.

- **Focus** - Focus on the problem in hand and remove any distractions from the space. This includes a no email rule, and if you must make a phone call leave the space to do so. SPRINT is

a compressed problem-solving model, and relies on a laser focus by all participating.

- **Time** - The four-day process is challenging and tiring. Ensure participants have time to unwind and clear their minds at the end of each day.

- **Contribution** - All ideas are equal. Regardless of hierarchy in the workplace, CU SPRINT is about teasing out the best ideas from all involved. If someone has a good idea, encourage them to share it. Bringing different perspectives from different levels of responsibility is core to ensuring an end product which works for all involved.

- **Don't be Precious** - If ideas are suggested which will take longer to explore, note them down and come back to them later. The CU SPRINT is about the creation of a Minimum Viable Product (MVP). Time is of the essence, and as such there won't be time to deep-dive every idea discussed.

Facilitator Tips and Tricks

To help you re-flavor the CU SPRINT to suit your needs and challenges we have put together some tips and tricks to make the most of the experience.

Names – If you don't know the individuals involved in the CU SPRINT, try writing their names in the corner of a whiteboard and making a quick layout plan. This can help you refer directly to the others in the room by name and avoid those awkward moments.

Kill Switch – If the CU SPRINT seems not to be working, offer the participants a chance to end the process. This moment of truth will allow you to judge the loyalty of participants to the session. If participants are not engaged in the process then the process won't achieve its goals and it's time to walk away.

Ask for Permission – After explaining the process, the fact you will be facilitating and keep things on time, ask the room "does that sound okay?" Don't expect any enthusiastic responses—but there is something powerful and symbolic about getting the team's permission. We learned this one from Jake Knapp.

Energy – The CU SPRINT is a tiring process. As a facilitator, you're the energy of the CU SPRINT. If you're down and tired, so will others be. If you're upbeat and energetic, the rest of the room usually follows.

Positive Feedback – Providing little reinforcing comments to participants as they navigate the process can provide an excellent catalyst for getting the most out of people. Comments such as "that's a great point, and really useful to the discussion" or "Excellent comment, we're right where we should be at this stage" are vital in bringing the room with you.

Pause – Using the word pause, rather than stop, makes a huge difference in the mood of the conversation. "Let's pause the conversation there" rather than "Let's stop the conversation" connote very different emotional responses when people feel passionately about the discussion.

Enjoy It – If you enjoy the process, it's more likely the others in the session will too. Running a CU SPRINT is challenging, but enjoy the challenge and keep thinking about the product you are helping to produce. Embrace the process and coach the participants to produce their absolute best work.

Drink Plenty – If you like your tea and coffee, fine, but remember to drink plenty of water also. This sounds simple, but when you're in the room and getting stuck in to the process you can easily forget. Keep hydrated.

Take a Break – Don't schedule a working lunch. At the midway point of each session, it helps to shake off the cobwebs from the morning and go for a walk. Encourage participants to get out of the room, even for ten minutes, and refresh their brains. There will be plenty more thinking to do in the afternoon.

Deal with Difficulty – This one is hard. Every now and then you'll get a difficult individual who might not want to engage. First, capture their comments on a whiteboard for later discussion and try to move on. If this fails, remind them that the process will take care of their concerns and that conversations will tackle their issues later on. Finally, if this fails then get direct. Pull them aside and constructively tell them to cut it out. If they still don't listen, ask them nicely to leave. Don't let one individual drain the mood of the room.

Take Photos – At the end of each day, take a photographic record of the artefacts in the room. This acts as both a journal of activity, and a backup in case something happens to your hard work overnight. Photographs of the process can also make for great PR material - but remember, you must have informed consent.

Embrace Flexibility – We advise only sending an overview of each day to participants in advance. Sometimes the CU SPRINT has to flex and adapt dependant on progress made or the problem explored. If you are behind schedule, don't tell the participants, but instead focus on getting back on track. Projecting confidence in the process is vital to participants buying in to the system.

Never Break Ice – Whilst icebreakers can be powerful tools in a facilitators arsenal, the process of the CU SPRINT will naturally break the ice itself. Starting with an ice breaking activity risks disillusioning participants before the activity begins. Confidence in the tried and tested process is key.

Preparation

As a facilitator, you will need to prepare for the CU SPRINT in advance. We've produced a checklist to help you make sure everything is ready;

- [ ] Book a room and send calendar invitations for the Pre-SPRINT meeting;
- [ ] Book a space for the duration of the CU SPRINT;
- [ ] Email the DMLL (dmll@coventry.ac.uk) to make them aware of your planned CU SPRINT;

	Set up an online shared space in OneDrive or SharePoint to store documentation;
	Arrange for tea, coffee and water to be delivered within the CU SPRINT;
	Familiarise yourself with the Corporate Strategy;
	Make sure you read the Education Strategy;
	Where possible, complete the Curriculum 2025 online course;
	Read into the background of Sprint methodology and design thinking processes;

Pre-SPRINT Meeting

The Pre-SPRINT meeting is an opportunity to meet the course development team and set the scene for the upcoming CU SPRINT. Pre-SPRINT meeting should take place four weeks prior to the CU SPRINT to enable time for actions to be completed. The Pre-SPRINT meeting should include all participants of the CU SPRINT where possible, but must include the Course Director and key Module Leaders.

The Pre-SPRINT meeting should cover the following:

- Provide an overview of the CU SPRINT process and rationale;
- Identify key stakeholders (Course Team, Group Quality Unit, Academic Development etc.);
- Identify key drivers for course design (accreditation, placement etc.);
- The role of the facilitator;
- The responsibilities of the course team;
- Setting the expectations for the process.

Day One (Monday)

Photo by **Thought Catalog** on **Unsplash**

Day one of the CU SPRINT focuses on unpacking the course content and looking at what type of graduate the course team are trying to produce. Day one can be an opportunity for the course team to complain about perceived injustices within the organization. Allow them the time to complain, but keep steering them towards success - a positive attitude and resilient approach is key. The day will empower

participants to deep-dive their ideas and develop a collective vision of what success looks like. This collective vision will be vital when developing the structure and content of the course itself.

09:00 **Welcome and Introductions (30m)**

Welcome participants to the process and undertake a round-table introduction to each individual's role and responsibility within the CU SPRINT.

09:30 **Graduate Competencies Mapping (40m)**

Ask participants to brainstorm a list of skills and competencies they would like to see in the ideal graduate upon completion of the course. Write all the ideas on a whiteboard in list form to refer to later in the process. Prompt the course team to consider soft skills (communication, digital fluency etc.) as well as industry-specific competencies.

10:10 **Graduate Statement Generation (60m)**

From the list of skills and competencies, lead the course team to develop a one-sentence statement to sum up the essence of the process. Write this statement above your skills and competencies list. This statement is designed to sense-check decision making throughout the CU SPRINT and will live for the next four days. Remind participants that they can come back to the statement and change things at a later date.

11:10 **Course SWOT Analysis (50m)**

Ask the course team to collectively map the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the course onto a SWOT diagram. This should be drawn on a whiteboard. You can write the course teams ideas onto the whiteboard or ask them to write them on post-it notes to map against the four sections of SWOT. Use this as an opportunity to gather all the strong points of the current course to make sure they feed-forward into the design process.

12:00 **Prospective Student Statement (20m)**

If time permits, ask the course team to produce another one-sentence statement to sum up the ideal prospective student coming onto the course. This is an opportunity to draw out any pre-conceptions of the course team and bring the entire room to a collective sense of the purpose of the course.

12:30 **Lunch Break (60m)**

Encourage participants to go for a walk and get out of the CU SPRINT room. Use this as an opportunity to reflect and unwind.

13:30 **Course Learning Outcome Generation (90m)**

In a collective online document (or on the wall) ask the course team to develop a list of six to ten course level learning outcomes. Prompt the course team to consider FHEQ-level appropriate language, the corporate plan, and any industry-specific needs. As the course team discuss their ideas, live type/write them up.

15:00   Course Theme Mapping (50m)

Ask participants to create a list of course themes. These should be broad overarching approaches imperative to student success and might include "research" or "ethics". Write the course themes down on the left-hand side of a whiteboard, one under another. These themes will form the basis of the course map.

15:50   **Debrief and Kill Switch (10m)**

Spend ten minutes debriefing with the course team before providing an opportunity for them to end the CU SPRINT process. Remind the course team that you are there to facilitate only, and should they wish to take a different approach there are no hard feelings.

16:00   **End of Day One**

At the end of the first day make a record of the artefacts generated by the team. We recommend using a mobile phone to capture the information.

Participants Required: Course Team, CU SPRINT Facilitator.
Suggested Participants: Group Quality Unit, Academic Development.
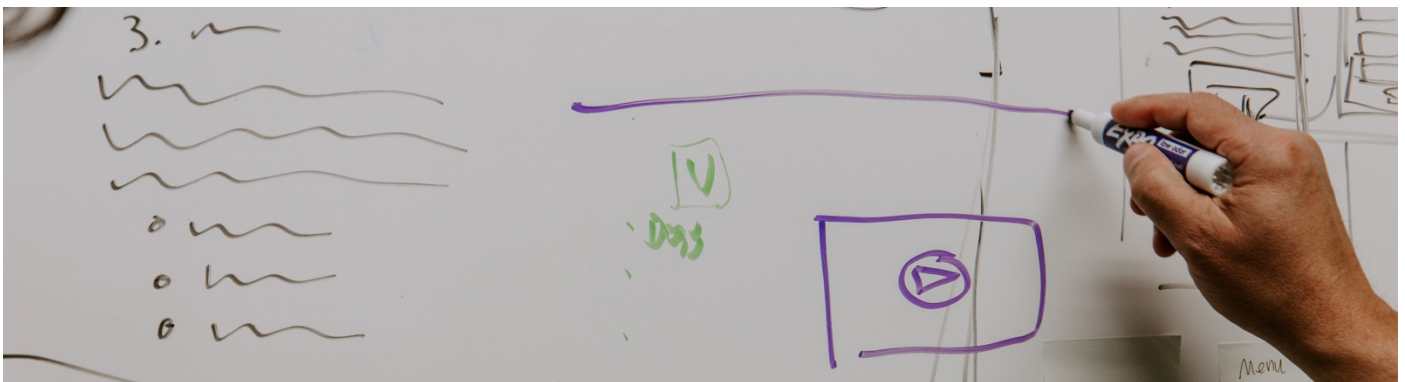
Day Two (Tuesday)

Photo by **Kaleidico** on **Unsplash**

Day two builds on the initial ideas explored in day one. You will begin mapping out the chronology of the course and designing an assessment strategy. This is an opportunity for the course team to collectively design key elements of the curriculum, from modules, to themes, to assessment types. Emphasize the importance of collective working - all ideas are equal at this point. It is important for the entire course team to be involved in the design, as through collective design of the product, those teaching on the program will feel empowered to own the topics deployed.

09:00   **Welcome and Recap (30m)**

Re-welcome participants to the process and spend half an hour recapping on the progress made from day one of the CU SPRINT.

09:30   **Course Theme Mapping Continued (60m)**

Continue mapping the course themes from day one. Make sure to stay away from module content and talk about big picture ideas. Guide participants to keep a general approach (theme) rather than delving into specifics (topics).

Facilitator Tip: At the top of the list map up the key pillars of the education strategy. Mapping against these helps ensure the course meets University expectations.

10:30   **Course Content Mapping (90m)**

Based on the course themes, begin to map the chronology of the course across its entire duration. For this exercise we use the circuit board diagram. Where a theme is explicitly taught a solid line should be drawn. For implicit learning/application a dashed line should be drawn, and where the topic is not covered at all no line should be drawn. This should provide an overarching picture of where themes are covered within the course structure.

Facilitator Tip: See Appendix One for an example of a course diagram.

12:30   **Lunch Break (60m)**

Encourage participants to go for a walk and get out of the CU SPRINT room. Use this as an opportunity to reflect and unwind.

13:30   **Course Assessment Mapping (100m)**

Building on the diagram produced in the morning, hang assessment points off the diagram to develop a course-level assessment strategy. You should encourage participants to consider innovative assessment types and authentic assessment practices. Discuss how assessments can be utilised to provide feed-forward comments and reduce staff time overheads.

Facilitator Tip: See Appendix One for an example of a course diagram.

15:10   **Module Wrapping**

Based on your assessments, it is now time to wrap assessments together and provide credit weightings. This will form the basis of your modules. Attach a credit weight to each assessment before linking assessments together to form modules.

15:50   **Debrief and Kill Switch (10m)**

Spend ten minutes debriefing with the course team before providing an opportunity for them to end the CU SPRINT process.

16:00   **End of Day Two**

As with day one, take a record of the work completed to date.

Participants Required: Course Team, CU SPRINT Facilitator.
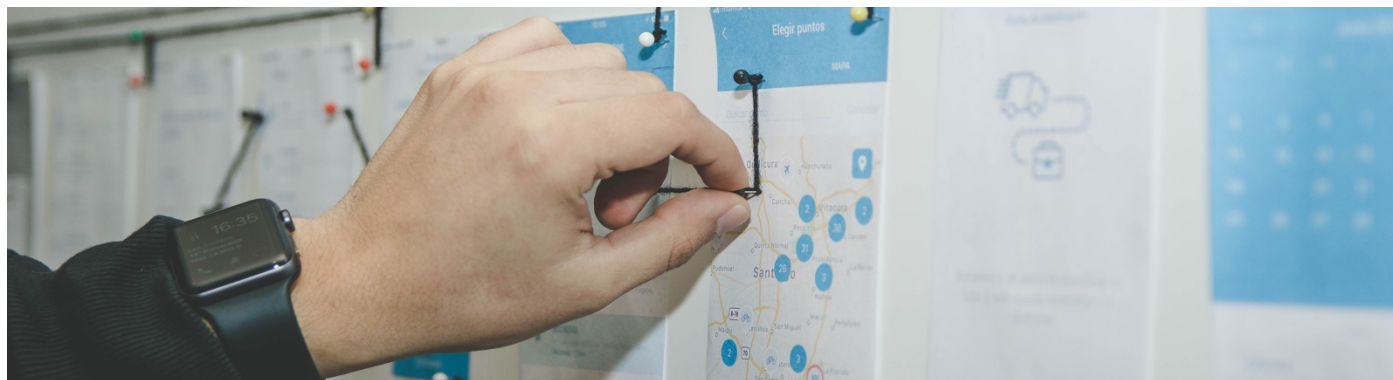
Day Three (Wednesday)

Photo by **Alvaro Reyes** on **Unsplash**

Day three explores the market viability of the course and makes a start on the Course Specification documentation. Collectively, the team will create a mock website or prospectus, in the process considering what the unique selling point of their product is and how they can communicate it to potential students. They will also start working on the course documentation paperwork, producing the introduction and ethos based on the last few days work. This day is not about producing a website/prospectus, but about producing the content which might be used to market the course to students. Your role is to provide the platform in which they can rapidly re-design their thoughts as the conversations progress. Encourage the course team to think like students, removing as much academic language as possible. This is about ensuring the product is accessible and understood by the target audience.

09:00   **Welcome and Recap (30m)**

Re-welcome participants to the process and spend half an hour recapping on the progress made from day two of the CU SPRINT.

09:30   **Mock Website / Prospectus Generation (180m)**

The morning of day three is spent carefully thinking about how to market the course to prospective students. You will facilitate the course team in the development of a mock website and/or prospectus to sell the course to the target audience. We recommend glossing up on Adobe Experience Design (XD) as an excellent tool for rapid prototyping. If you're uncomfortable using technology, paper-based prototyping can also work well.

The Mock Website / Prospectus should include the following:

- An overview of the course;
- Why someone should choose the course;
- Unique selling points of the course;
- How students will be taught;
- How students will be assessed;
- Any international experience opportunities.

12:30   **Lunch Break (60m)**

Encourage participants to go for a walk and get out of the CU SPRINT room. Use this as an opportunity to reflect and unwind.

13:30   **Course Specification Part A (150m)**

Move through the course specification documentation step-by-step with the course team. You will need to live-type their comments to produce a running commentary - thus providing the headspace for the course team to think deeply about the course. Remind participants that Part A of the Course Specification is a public-facing document and is legally binding.

Course Specification Part A Covers the following areas;

1. Introduction
2. Available Awards and Modes of Study
3. Awarding Institution
4. Collaboration
5. Teaching Institution and Location of Delivery
6. Internal Approval / Review Dates
7. Course Accreditation
8. Accreditation Date and Duration
9. QAA Subject Benchmarks
10. Date of Course Specification
11. Course Director
12. Outline and Educational Aims of the Course
13. Course Learning Outcomes
14. Course Structure and Requirements (and Module Titles)
15. Criteria for Admission and Selection
16. Academic Regulations
17. Indicators of Quality Enhancement
18. Additional Information

Facilitator Tip: Try to get the course team to write the content from scratch. It may be tempting to cut and paste existing statements, but experience shows us this often takes longer and reduces the quality of the finished artefact.

16:00   **End of Day Two**

As with day one, take a record of the work completed to date.

Participants Required: Course Team, CU SPRINT Facilitator.

Day Four (Thursday)

Photo by **Glenn Carstens-Peters** on **Unsplash**

Day four is centered around the formal documentation required for course approval. In real time, you'll help the course team to collaboratively fill out the documentation, referring back to their initial ideas and the visual diagrams around the room. This is about communicating the ethos of the ideas to both the University and the wider public. Encourage the course team to look back at what they have designed over the past few days and draw this into the documentation. Become the critical friend who keeps referring back to the idea graduate, and ask the team how their decisions shape that individual.

09:00 **Welcome and Recap (30m)**

Re-welcome participants to the process and spend half an hour recapping and discussing any changes to the course design from previous days.

09:30 **Course Specification Part A Continued (180m)**

Move through the course specification documentation step-by-step with the course team. You will need to live-type their comments to produce a running commentary - thus providing the headspace for the course team to think deeply about the course. Remind participants that Part A of the Course Specification is a public-facing document and is legally binding.

Course Specification Part A Covers the following areas;

19. Introduction
20. Available Awards and Modes of Study
21. Awarding Institution
22. Collaboration
23. Teaching Institution and Location of Delivery
24. Internal Approval / Review Dates
25. Course Accreditation
26. Accreditation Date and Duration
27. QAA Subject Benchmarks
28. Date of Course Specification
29. Course Director
30. Outline and Educational Aims of the Course
31. Course Learning Outcomes
32. Course Structure and Requirements (and Module Titles)
33. Criteria for Admission and Selection
34. Academic Regulations

35. Indicators of Quality Enhancement
36. Additional Information

Facilitator Tip: If you are unable to fill our parts of the Course Specification, highlight these in yellow for the course team to come back to at a later date.

12:30 **Lunch Break (60m)**

Encourage participants to go for a walk and get out of the CU SPRINT room. Use this as an opportunity to reflect and unwind.

13:30 **Course Specification Part B (120m)**

As with Part A of the Course Specification, live type the course teams ideas directly into the documentation. Provide prompts and challenges around how the course meets the University plans and strategies and encourage the course team to sell the innovative features of the course.

Course Specification Part B Covers the following areas;

1. Rationale for Course Design
2. Relationships to National Qualifications Framework and Professional Benchmarks
3. Teaching and Learning Strategy
4. Student Experience and Support
5. Course Assessment Strategy
6. Course Assessment Strategy Mapping by Module

Facilitator Tip: If you are unable to fill our parts of the Course Specification, highlight these in yellow for the course team to come back to at a later date.

15:30 **Debrief (30m)**

Spend half an hour at the end of the final day to debrief with participants. This is an opportunity to reflect on the process and consider what improvements could be made in future. This time can also be used to complete the DMLL Unified Evaluation (dmll.org.uk/research).

16:00 **End of Day Four**

As with all other days, take a record of the final product. Make sure you capture plenty of photographs and store these in the shared online folder. Ensure all course documentation is uploaded and an editable access link sent to the course team.

Participants Required: Course Team, CU SPRINT Facilitator.
Suggested Participants: Group Quality Unit, AHoS Student Experience, AHoS Quality.

Day Five: Friday (Optional)

Photo by **José Alejandro Cuffia** on **Unsplash**

The optional fifth day of the process user-tests the course developed over the last week. Stakeholders from a range of backgrounds and experiences will pick apart your course design. Don't be disheartened by this. It's better to build in the feed-forward this provides to ensure the course design is solid and relevant when it goes to market. There will be an opportunity to amend the course during the afternoon before finishing the SPRINT process.

09:00   **Welcome and Recap (30m)**

Re-welcome participants to the process and brief them on the day ahead.

09:30   **Last Minute Tweaks and Changes (30m)**

Use this time to provide any last minute tweaks and changes to the Course Specification documentation and mock prospectus/website.

10:00   **Interview Session One (60m)**

Invite your interview participants (students, staff, external accreditor etc.) into the room and show them the mock website/prospectus. Ask them to provide feedback on the course and ask open-ended questions to prompt conversation around specific areas. Note down any feedback received to review in the afternoon session.

11:00   **Interview Session Two (60m)**

Invite your interview participants (students, staff, external accreditor etc.) into the room and show them the mock website/prospectus. Ask them to provide feedback on the course and ask open-ended questions to prompt conversation around specific areas. Note down any feedback received to review in the afternoon session.

12:00   **Lunch (60m)**

Encourage participants to go for a walk and get out of the CU SPRINT room. Use this as an opportunity to reflect and unwind.

13:00   **Debrief (120m)**

Spend the remainder of the day building in any feedback you have received around the course design. Once complete make sure you save any documents you have been working on!

15:00   **End of CU SPRINT**

As with all other days, take a record of the final product. Make sure you capture plenty of photographs and store these in the shared online folder. Ensure all course documentation is uploaded and an editable access link sent to the course team.

Participants Required: Course Team, CU SPRINT Facilitator.
Suggested Participants: Current Students, Alumni, Wider Course Team, Accrediting Bodies.

Post-SPRINT

The final role of the facilitator is to hand over the course design to the academic team. Make sure all documentation and photographs are stored in a shared drive and provide access to all participants of the CU SPRINT. Thank the course team for their hard work and be sure to provide Clear Review feedback where appropriate.

If you haven't already done so, please send the Course Team a link to the Disruptive Media Learning Lab Unified Evaluation Questionnaire, available from **dmll.org.uk/research**.

Additional Support

If you would like additional support, or to discuss how the CU SPRINT process might work for you, then you can get in touch with the Disruptive Media Learning Lab by email or telephone. We also recommend visiting the **Google Ventures Sprint website** and **buying the sprint book**!

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For useful links and supportive resources see Appendix Two.

Did you know?

The Disruptive Media Learning Lab runs a level 6 Add+Vantage module on **Google Ventures Design SPRINT for Disruptive Innovation** (A302DMLL). If you think sprint methodology may be useful for your students contact Alan Richards, Module Leader to find out more.

Appendix One
Course Circuit Board Diagram Example

Solid Line: Theme Explicitly Taught
Dashed Line: Theme Implicitly Learned
No Line: Theme Not Covered
Red Node: Theme Assessed
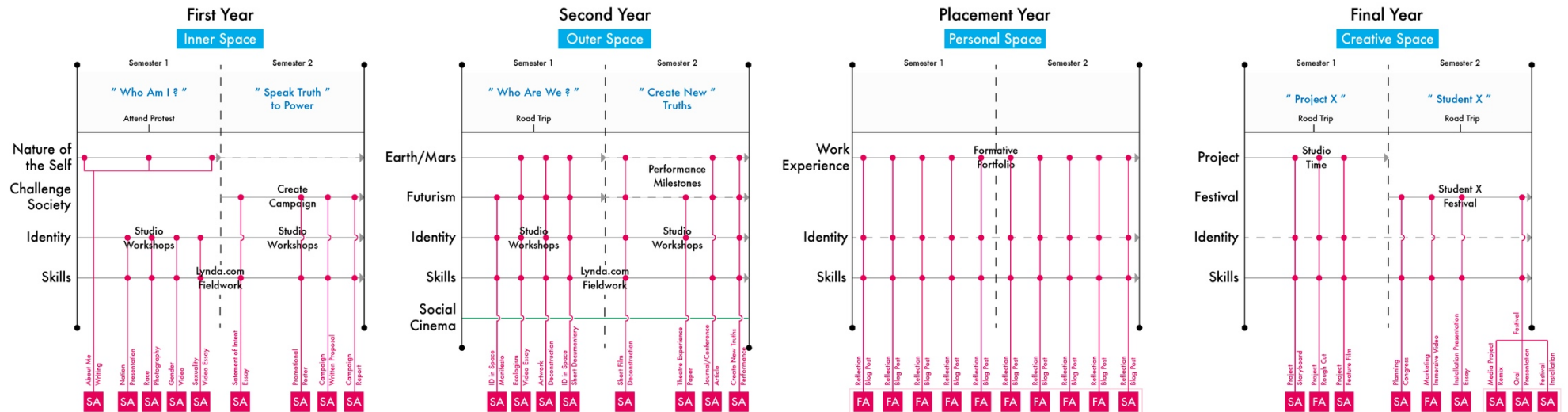
Additional Key Items:

C	Core Assessment Type	**FA**	Formative Assessment Type		Theme Not Covered (No Line)
CA	Core Applied Assessment Type	⋯⋯	Theme Implicitly Learned	●	Theme Assessed
CL	Course Level Assessment Type	▬	Theme Explicitly Taught	⟩	Theme Not Assessed

Appendix Two
Useful Links and Supportive Resources

Photo by **Paul Schafer** on **Unsplash**

Google Ventures Sprint Book (Online)	Available on **locate.coventry.ac.uk**
Google Ventures Sprint Website	**gv.com/sprint**
Sprint Stories (Case Studies)	**sprintstories.com**
Beyond Flipped Website	**flipped.coventry.ac.uk**
CU SPRINT Overview	**flipped.coventry.ac.uk/sprint**
CU Course Design SPRINT Overview	**flipped.coventry.ac.uk/five-day-sprint**
Disruptive Media Learning Lab Website	**dmll.org.uk**
Corporate Strategy	Available on **coventry.ac.uk**
Education Strategy	Available on **staff.coventry.ac.uk**
Course Specification Part A	Available on **staff.coventry.ac.uk**
Course Specification Part B	Available on **staff.coventry.ac.uk**

Appendix Three
CU SPRINT Equipment List

Photo by **Gautam Lakum** on **Unsplash**

As part of the preparation for a CU SPRINT it is important to make sure you have all the equipment needed to smoothly delivery the process. We've produced a CU SPRINT equipment list to help you with your preparations.

- [ ] Room booked for duration of CU SPRINT;
- [ ] Magic Whiteboard Paper to turn any wall into a whiteboard;
- [ ] Multiple different colored whiteboard pens;
- [ ] A networked computer with connections for projector;
- [ ] A portable projector if one is not available in the room;
- [ ] Sheets of A4 paper for each participant to note down ideas;
- [ ] Multiple pens/pencils for participants;
- [ ] A Sprint Timer to help keep the session on schedule;
- [ ] Post-it notes to capture participant ideas;
- [ ] Access to a shared online space (SharePoint or similar) to store digital artefacts;
- [ ] Sticky dot stickers for voting on ideas;
- [ ] A number of decks of L·E·A·R·N curriculum design cards.

If you're looking to run a GV Sprint, Jake Knapp has produced a shopping list of everything you need to deliver a GV Sprint. Visit **https://kit.com/jakek/the-sprint-kit** for more details.