Getting the Blend Right
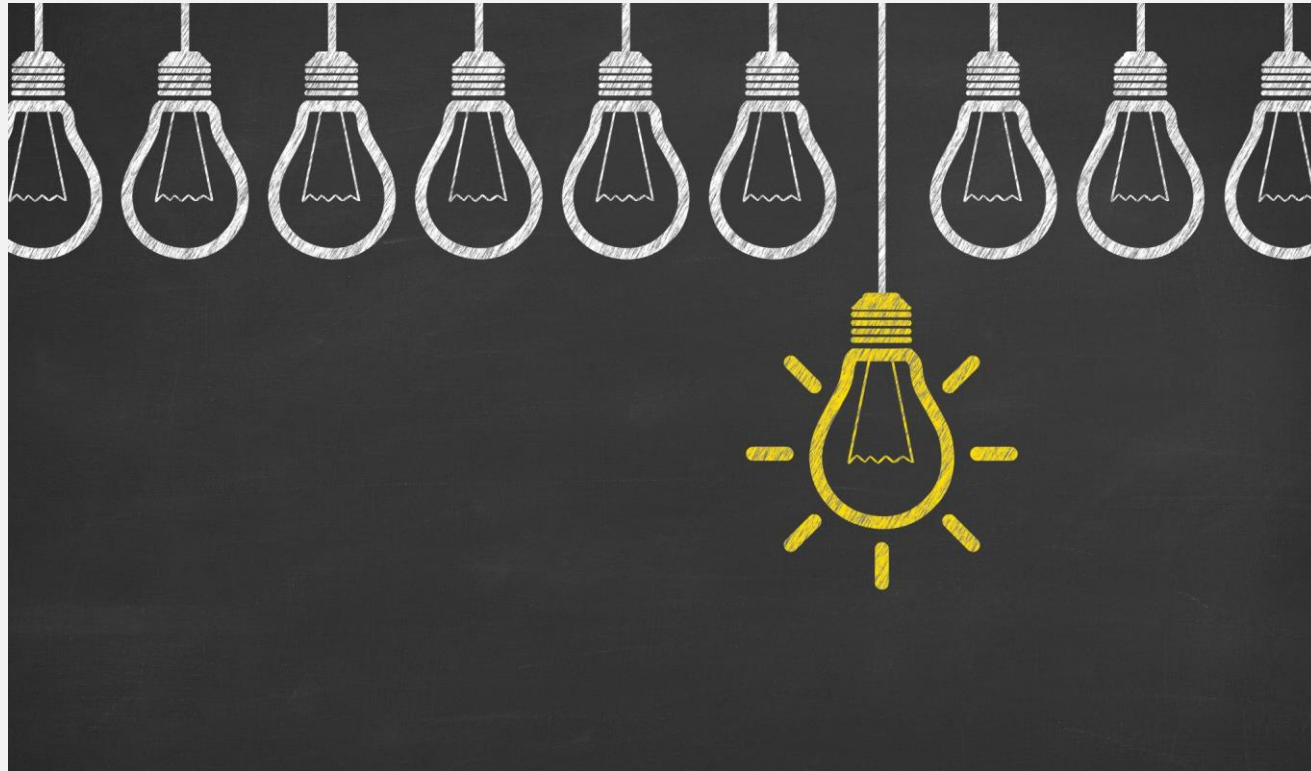
Inspiring students through blended learning

Dr Alison Gilmour
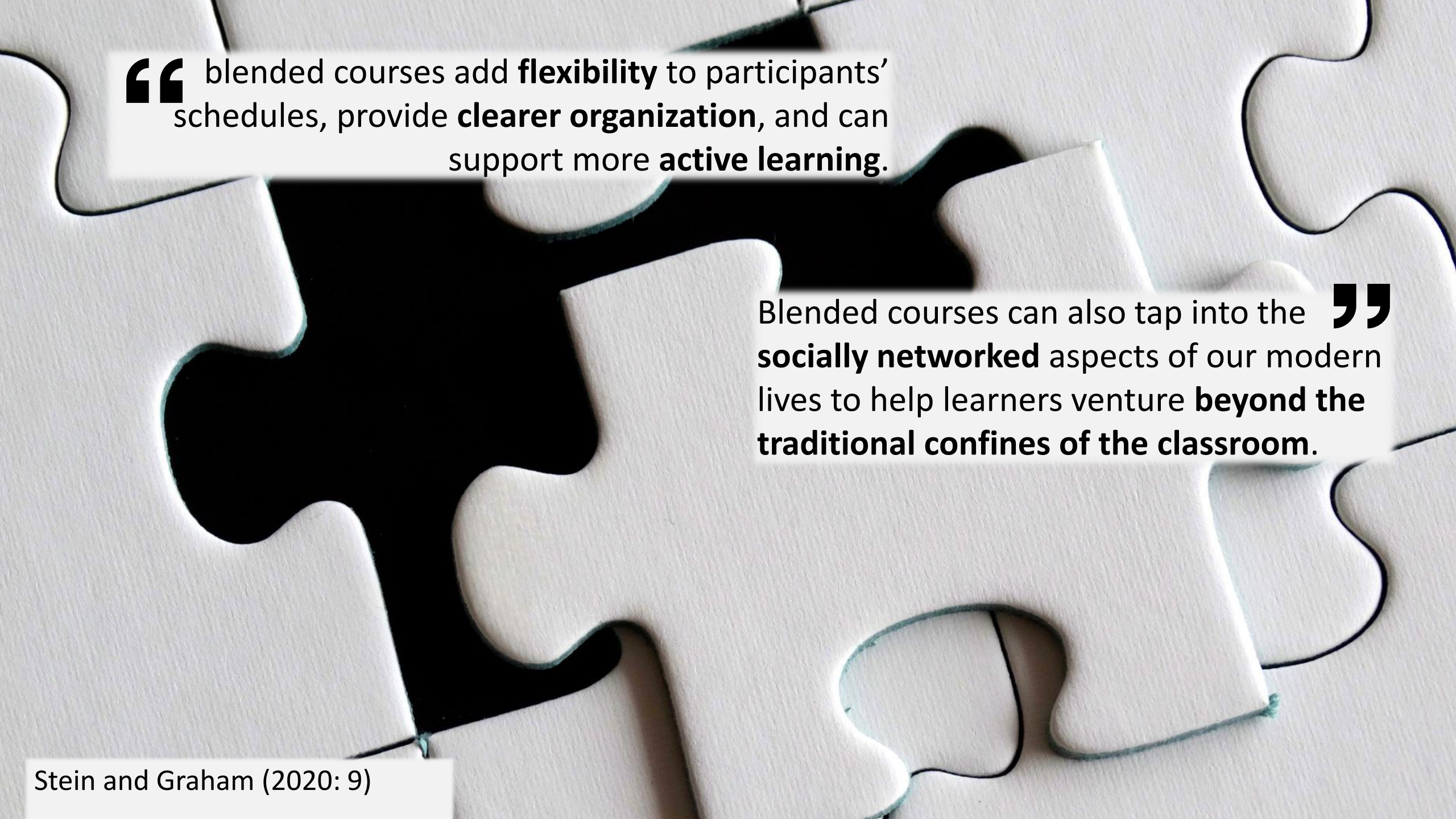University of Greenwich
@AlisonGilmour

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Coherence, Connection, Care

Blended Learning: promises and pragmatism

Our role as teachers and 'The blend'

Motivating and ultimately ... caring

" blended courses add **flexibility** to participants' schedules, provide **clearer organization**, and can support more **active learning**.

Blended courses can also tap into the **socially networked** aspects of our modern lives to help learners venture **beyond the traditional confines of the classroom**. "

Stein and Graham (2020: 9)

What do we mean by blended learning?

'a combination of face-to-face learning and dynamic digital activities and content that facilitate anytime/anyplace learning.'

(JISC, 2020)

Our focus...

Thinking pragmatically or critically?

- focus on the technology can result in less focus on pedagogy – from "how" to "why"?

- seeking to replicate rather than reconstruct

- absence of coherence and purpose

- absence of 'social presence'

(Garrison, Anderson and Archer, 2000)

Blended learning: promises and pragmatism

For what purpose have you introduced digital technology?

To what extent have you considered the combination of activities and content as part of a coherent blended learning approach?

What does this mean, relative to your pedagogy?

Teachers as 'travel guides'

(Laurillard, 2002)

Our role as teachers

Designing
Signposting and Rhythm
Scaffolding and Facilitating

What type of learning?
What activities?
What space? Physical or digital?
Synchronous or asynchronous?
Your role before, during and after

Laurillard's (2002) Conversational Framework & ABC Learning Design

Acquisition

Discussion

Collaboration

Investigation

Practice

Production

Laurillard's ABC Learning Design: Acquisition

In-class lecture or demonstration

Bite-sized curated content

Replacing a lecture with a series of 10-minute videos or a mix of curated open access content

Laurillard's ABC Learning Design: Discussion

In-class discussion of a case study

Online discussion forum

Students answer three questions on the case study and are directed on ways of engaging with three peers

Laurillard's ABC Learning Design: Collaboration

Development of group project

Shared collaborative documents such as Office 365/ One Note

Development of group presentation using Office365.

Laurillard's ABC Learning Design: Production

In class presentation

Pre-recorded presentation

Advance delivery of presentation synchronous discussion in class
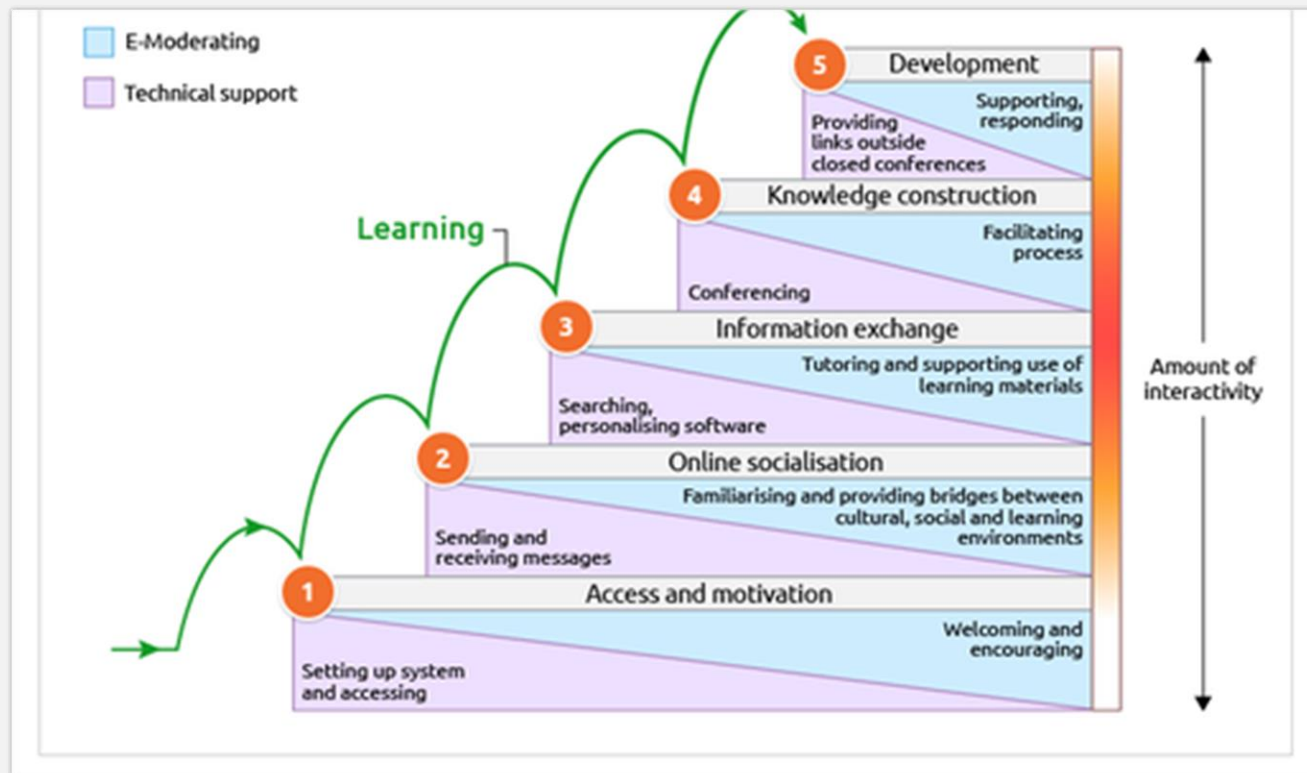
Maximising student engagement

- Making the purpose and relevance clear

- Connecting learning

- Social presence underpins cognitive engagement and meaningful learning

- This is new for most learners therefore socialisation is important

Gilly Salmon's E-tivities (2013)

- Less focus on content and more on how we build participation with structured activities.

- Attention to building skill and confidence.

- Motivate - Build - Pace

https://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html

Concluding thoughts – getting the blend right?

What you are trying to achieve?

Coherence to you and your students

Ask your students

Be iterative and responsive

Value different engagement equally

Proactively reach out

The importance of care

'The response to the Covid-19 pandemic has abruptly shifted more than one million students to fully online or remote instruction.

And what has become immediately clear is that students face much more than technological hurdles.'

(Stommel, Friend and Morris, 2020: 2)

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