Silent learners

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Blog: The corridor of uncertainty

Who is included/excluded?

Photo by Sam Balye on Unsplash

Why are some learners silent?

Low self-confidence

Personal issues

Need time to think

Introvert

Not familiar with rules of group

Not fluent in course language

Feel intimidated or ignored by peers

Not polite to question teacher or peers

Only interested in the certificate

Distracted or bored

Technical issues

We're all silent learners, sometimes

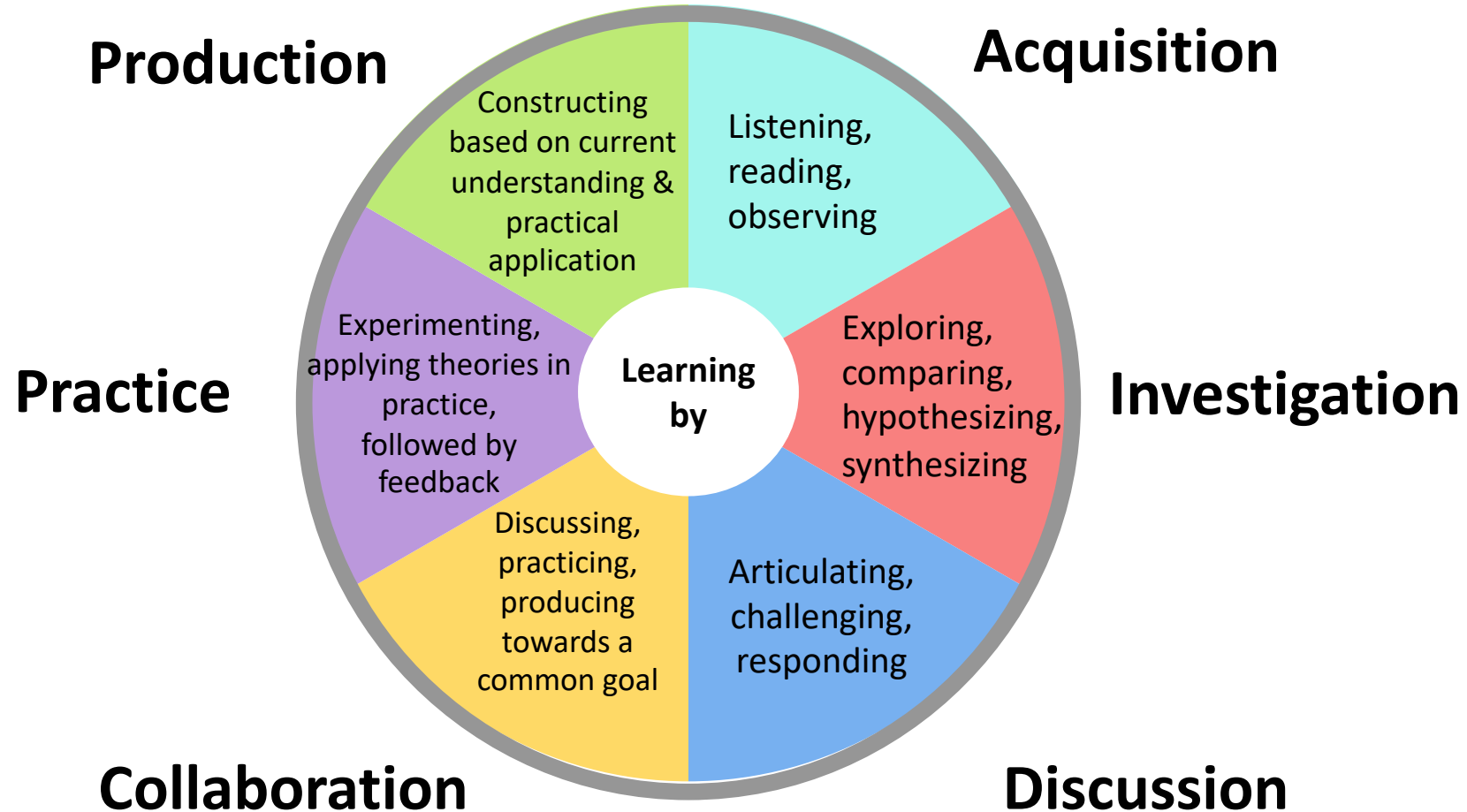# From lurking to learning

Rene Asmussen on Pexels

Blended learning?

- In class, at home, with peers …
- On-site/online.
- Synchronous/asynchronous.
- Teacher-lead/student collaboration.
- Group work/self-study.
- Instruction/inquiry & discovery.
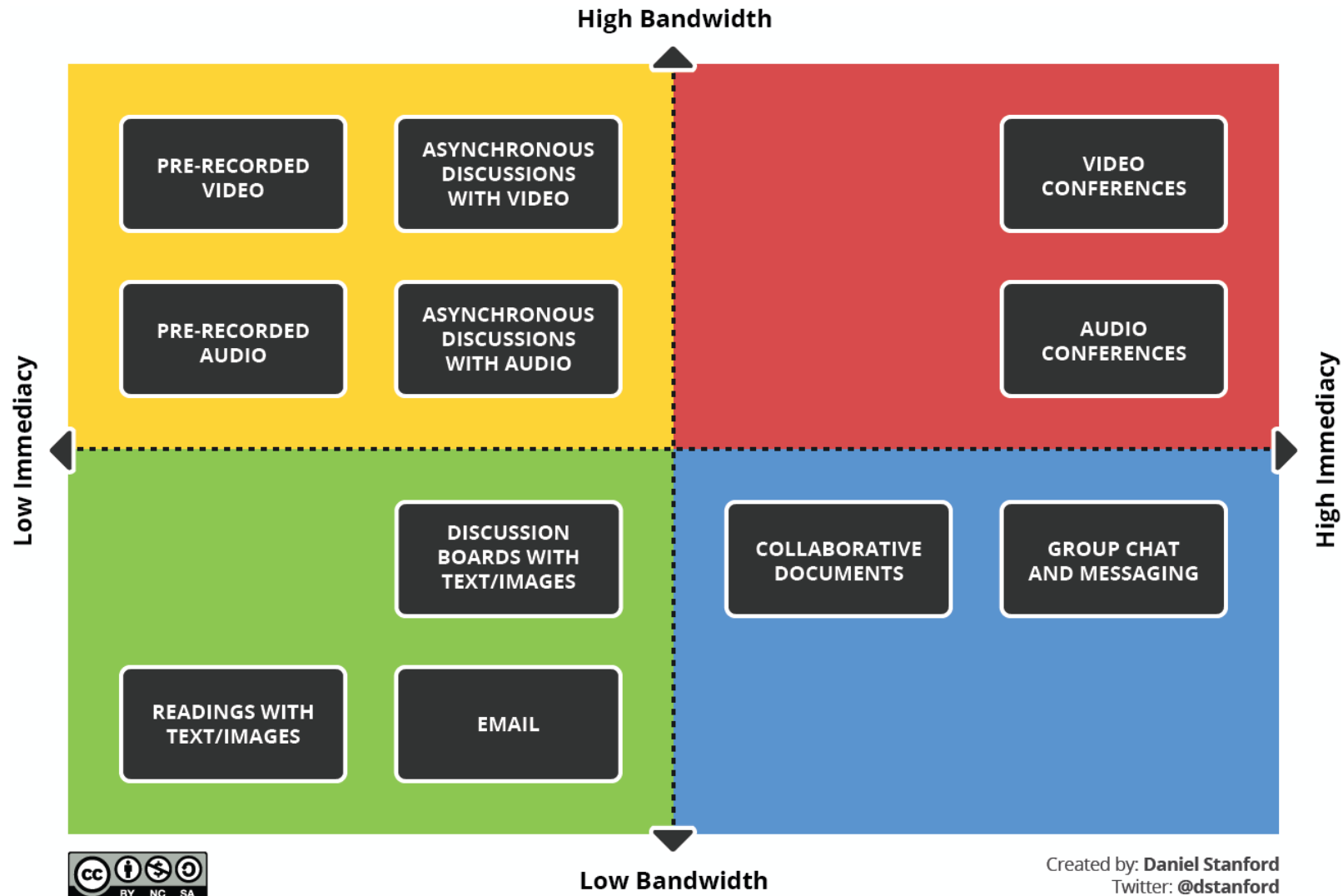- Theory/practice & problem-solving.

Photo by Flavio Anibal on Unsplash

Course design – getting the right blend

Laurillard, D. (2012) Teaching as a design science

Different channels

High Bandwidth

Low Immediacy

High Immediacy

- PRE-RECORDED VIDEO
- ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH VIDEO
- VIDEO CONFERENCES
- PRE-RECORDED AUDIO
- ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH AUDIO
- AUDIO CONFERENCES
- DISCUSSION BOARDS WITH TEXT/IMAGES
- COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTS
- GROUP CHAT AND MESSAGING
- READINGS WITH TEXT/IMAGES
- EMAIL

Low Bandwidth

Created by: **Daniel Stanford**
Twitter: **@dstanford**

Low bandwidth teaching

- Live chat – tlk.io.

- Messaging – Deltachat, Signal.

- Asynchronous interaction:
  - recorded audio input (podcast)
  - video/audio/text discussion (eg Flipgrid)
  - collaborative tools

- Downloadable material for offline access.

Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash

How can we increase student engagement online?

Photo by Chris Montgomery on Unsplash

Online meetings

- Connecting

- Camera on or off?

- Anonymity?

- Show interest, give credit, recognise contributions

- Avoid activities that exclude (high bandwidth)

- Alternative channels

Photo by LinkedIn Sales Solutions on Unsplash

Social contacts

- Pre-meeting – test audio and video, small talk.
- Ice-breaking – pairs/small groups.
- Post-meeting discussion.
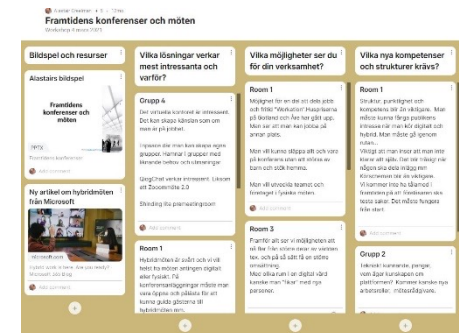- Drop-in sessions – video, audio or chat.

Photo by Maxime on Unsplash

Stretch the meeting

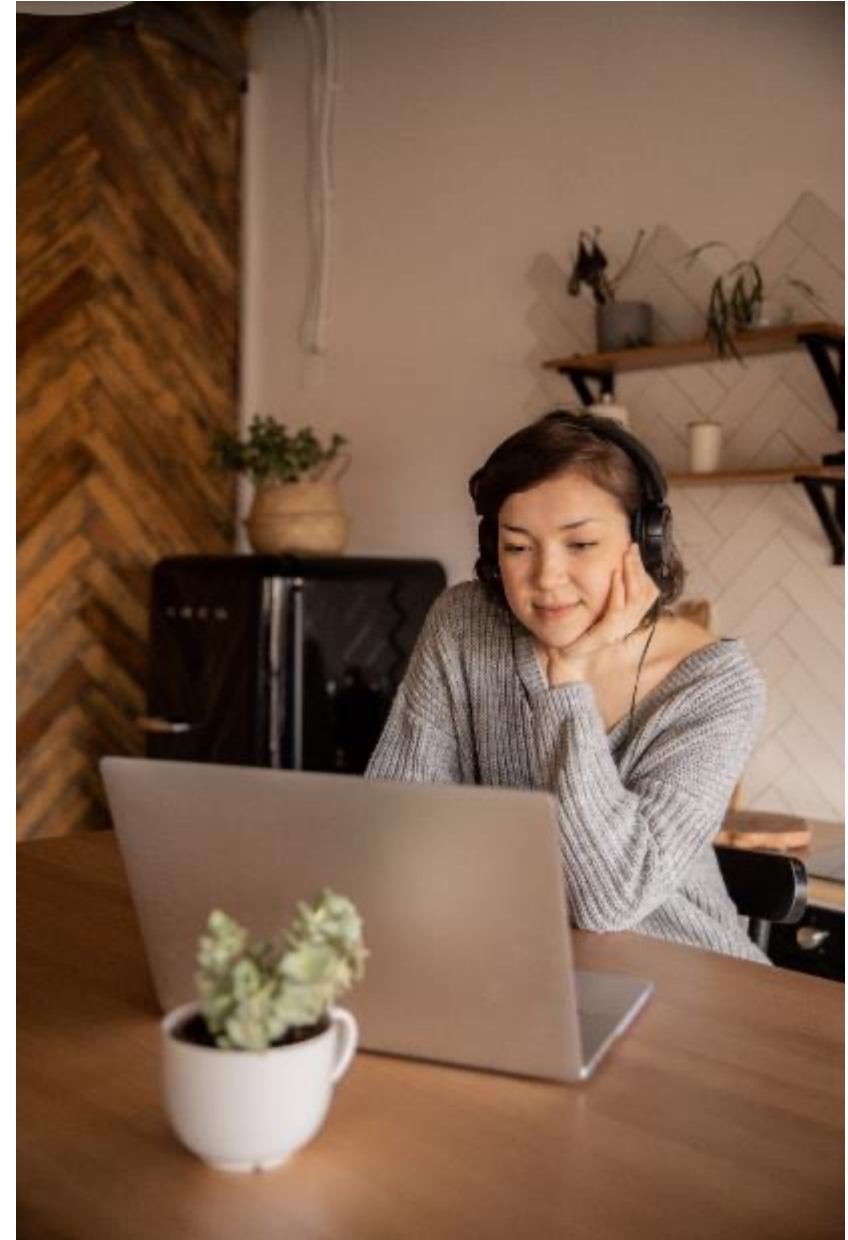**Recorded input**   **Discussion**   **Meeting**   **Discussion continues**
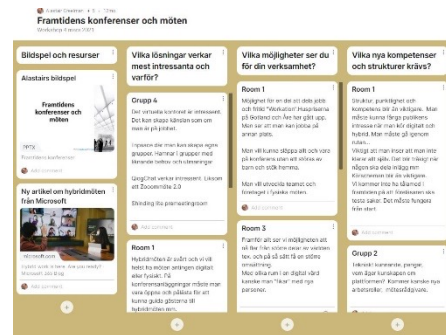
Get them on board

- Check in. How are you?
- Brainstorming in chat – chatfall
- Whiteboard
- Polls

Photo by Marvin Meyer on Unsplash

Recorded video

- Short and concise
- Pause for thought, invite discussion
- Embed questions in video ([EdPuzzle](#))
- Video feedback
- Weekly video summaries (teacher or students responsible)

Instead of recording

- Assign students to take notes in shared document
- Others can comment
- Focus on collaboration, reflection, summary

Photo by LinkedIn Sales Solutions on Unsplash

Group work

- Active learning
- Vital career/life skill
- From consumer to producer
- Higher level of course engagement
- Increase the quality of the event for all participants

Fear of group work

- Time-consuming.

- Messy, awkward, noisy.

- Insecurity, lack of trust.

- Risk for conflict.

- Dominant members.

- Groupthink.

Breakout groups

- Practice first with a trivial task.
- Build in time for socialising.
- Opt-out choice.
- Discuss rules for group work.
- Clear task – explain why.
- Assign roles.
- Meaningful follow-up.

Photo by **Anna Shvets** from **Pexels**

Spatial collaboration

- Focus on activity, not talking heads.
- Cameras off - focus on listening, thinking, sharing.
- Panel/round-table/fishbowl discussion.
- Brainstorming with digital post-its (eg Google Slides).

[Spatial collaboration: how to escape the webcam](#) David White (2021)

Time for thought

- Individual reflection (turn off camera and microphone)

- Take notes

- Pair/group reflection

- Class discussion

Silent meetings

- Shared document to read (short article, scenario, case study)

- Everyone silently comments and asks questions on shared document

- Teacher reads comments and identifies key themes for oral discussion

- Class discussion on key issues

Accessibility

- Clear language, structure and instructions

- Different media

- Captioning, text-to-speech, speech-to-text

- [How to make your PowerPoint presentations more accessible](#). (Holly Tuke)

- More asynchronous, low bandwidth communication

- Download option for offline access

Photo by Nicole Baster on Unsplash
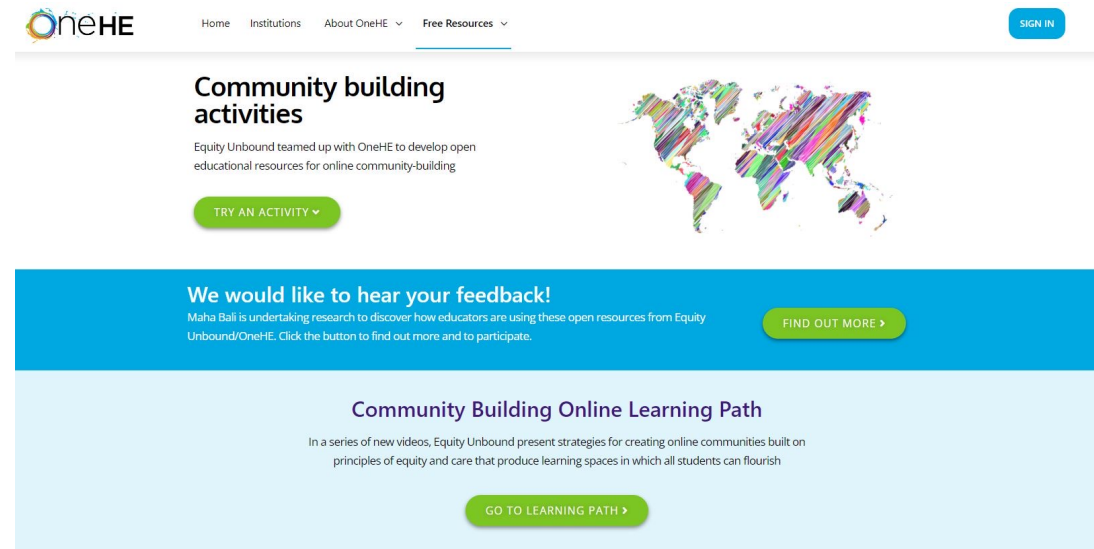
Silent learners

- Giving everyone a voice – but different modes of expression

- More silence in class – time for reflection

- Different activities: reflection, analysis, observation, discussion, production

- Silent learners – a guide

Resources and ideas

Community building activities
Equity Unbound & OneHE

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

Read more

- Gourlay, L. (2015) ['Student engagement' and the tyranny of participation](). Teaching in Higher Education, 20:4, 402-411

- Honeychurch, S. , Bozkurt, A., Singh, L. and Koutrapoulos, A. (2017) [Learners on the periphery: lurkers as invisible learners](). European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning, 20(1), pp. 191-211.

- Smith, D. & Smith, K. (2014) [The Case for 'Passive' Learning – The 'Silent' Community of Online Learners](). European Journal of Open, Distance and e-learning, Vol. 17 / No. 2.

Reflections
- share your experience