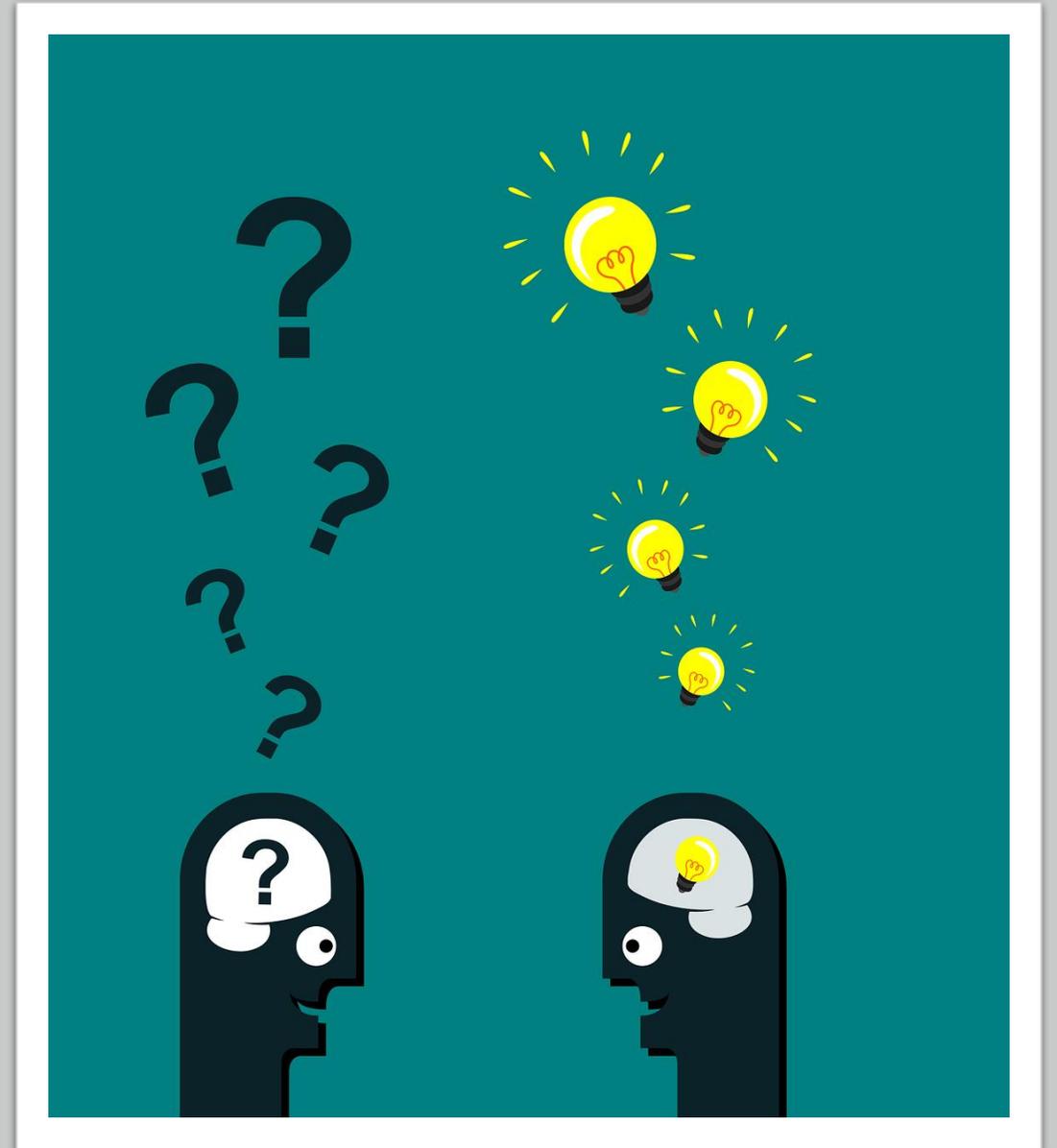


Embedding wellbeing in the curriculum: using a wellbeing lens to consider blended and online learning

Dr Alison Gilmour, University of Greenwich

How can learning,  
teaching  
and assessment  
positively  
shape student  
wellbeing?

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stated.



# The importance of care

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‘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)



# Definition of wellbeing 1

‘Wellbeing comprises a person’s mental health, physical health, financial sustainability, mood, family circumstances, workload, social life and many other things.

We want to be a community that embraces all facets of wellbeing, promotes positive actions that can be taken to enhance our own wellbeing, encourages a culture of support and discussion that acknowledges that wellbeing is dynamic and changing, and has a clear strategy to deal with the challenges and impacts of working and studying in higher education.’

# Definition of wellbeing 2

‘Wellbeing comprises a person’s mental health, physical health, financial sustainability, mood, family circumstances, workload, social life and many other things.

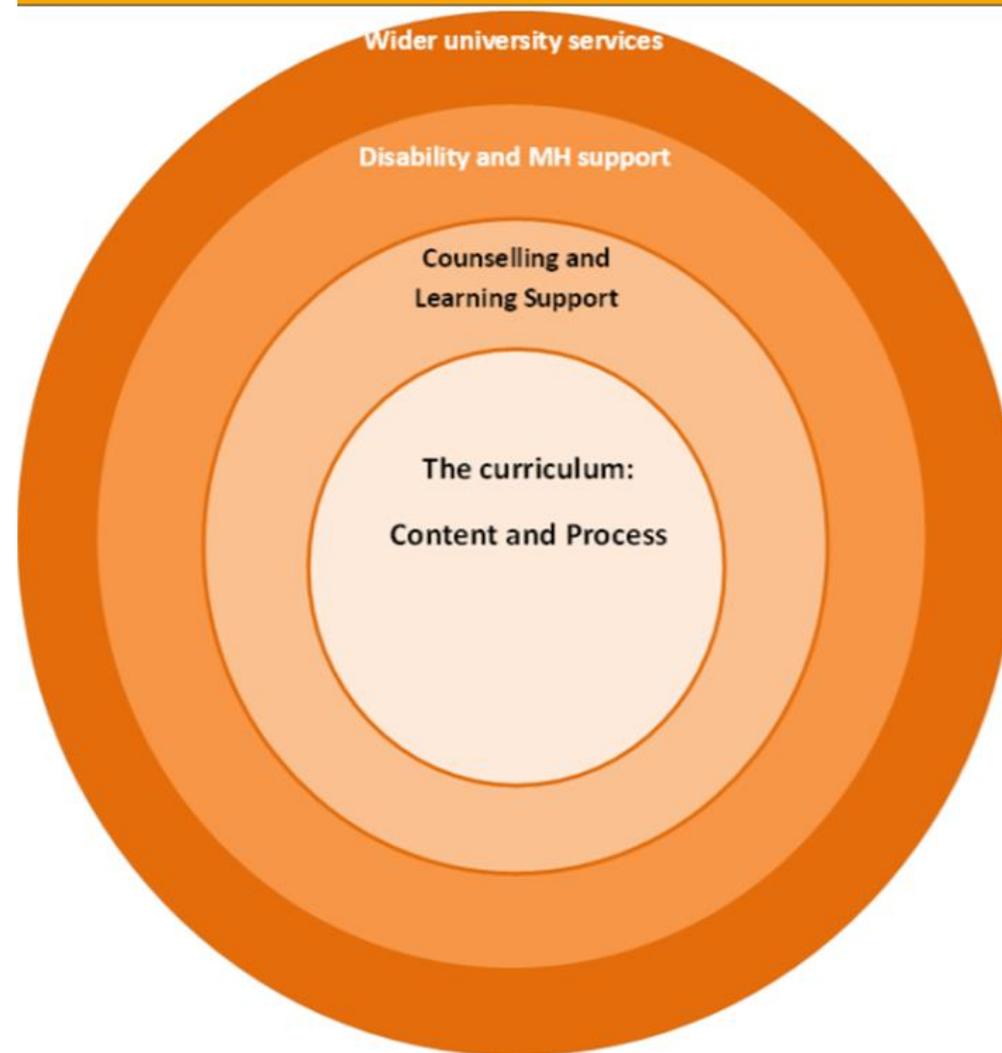
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# Embedding Wellbeing in the Curriculum

- ‘For students, their curriculum and their engagement with academics are their only guaranteed points of contact with their university.’ (Hughes et al., 2018: 12)
- Ann-Marie Houghton and Jill Anderson (2017) [\*Embedding Mental Wellbeing in the Curriculum: Maximising Success in Higher Education.\*](#)

Image: Houghton and Anderson, 2017: 15.

Figure 2: Enhancing student mental wellbeing – the curriculum at the core



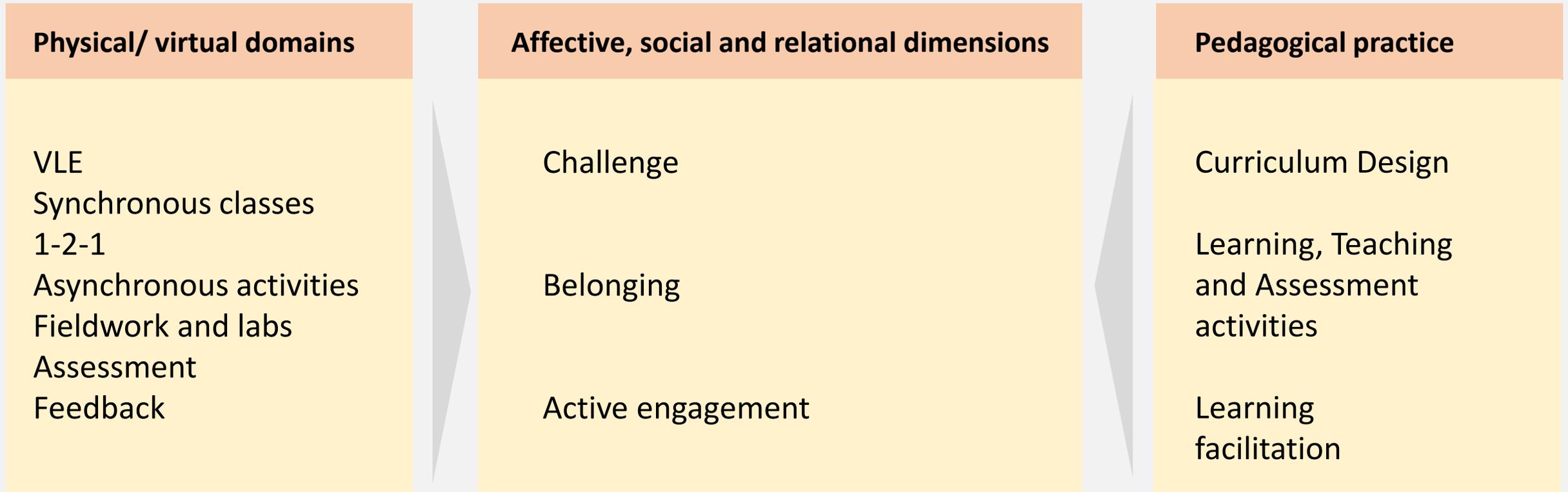
# The relationship between learning and wellbeing



Very accessible resource to get started:

Hughes, G. (2020) '[Supporting student wellbeing through curriculum design and delivery](https://lta.hw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Guide-NO20_Supporting-Student-Wellbeing-Through-Curriculum-Design-and-Delivery.pdf)'  
Available at: [https://lta.hw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Guide-NO20\\_Supporting-Student-Wellbeing-Through-Curriculum-Design-and-Delivery.pdf](https://lta.hw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Guide-NO20_Supporting-Student-Wellbeing-Through-Curriculum-Design-and-Delivery.pdf)

# Developing our thinking



N.B. This is very much a work in progress – to evolve a model to conceptualise the key themes in the literature related to wellbeing and learning and teaching, in order to frame a resource toolkit we are developing for staff. Your input is welcomed!

# Negotiating challenge

- Activities which normalise challenge (Jones et al., 2020) and 'maintain perspective' (Turner, Scott-Young and Holdsworth, 2017).
- Navigating challenge is associated with positive wellbeing and development of self-efficacy
  - a) Remove unnecessary stressors in the academic context
  - b) Explicitly engage with challenge: make this visible amongst peers and role model
  - c) Support reflection on transition through self-reflection activities, and development of skills and knowledge to negotiate challenge and support self-regulated learning.



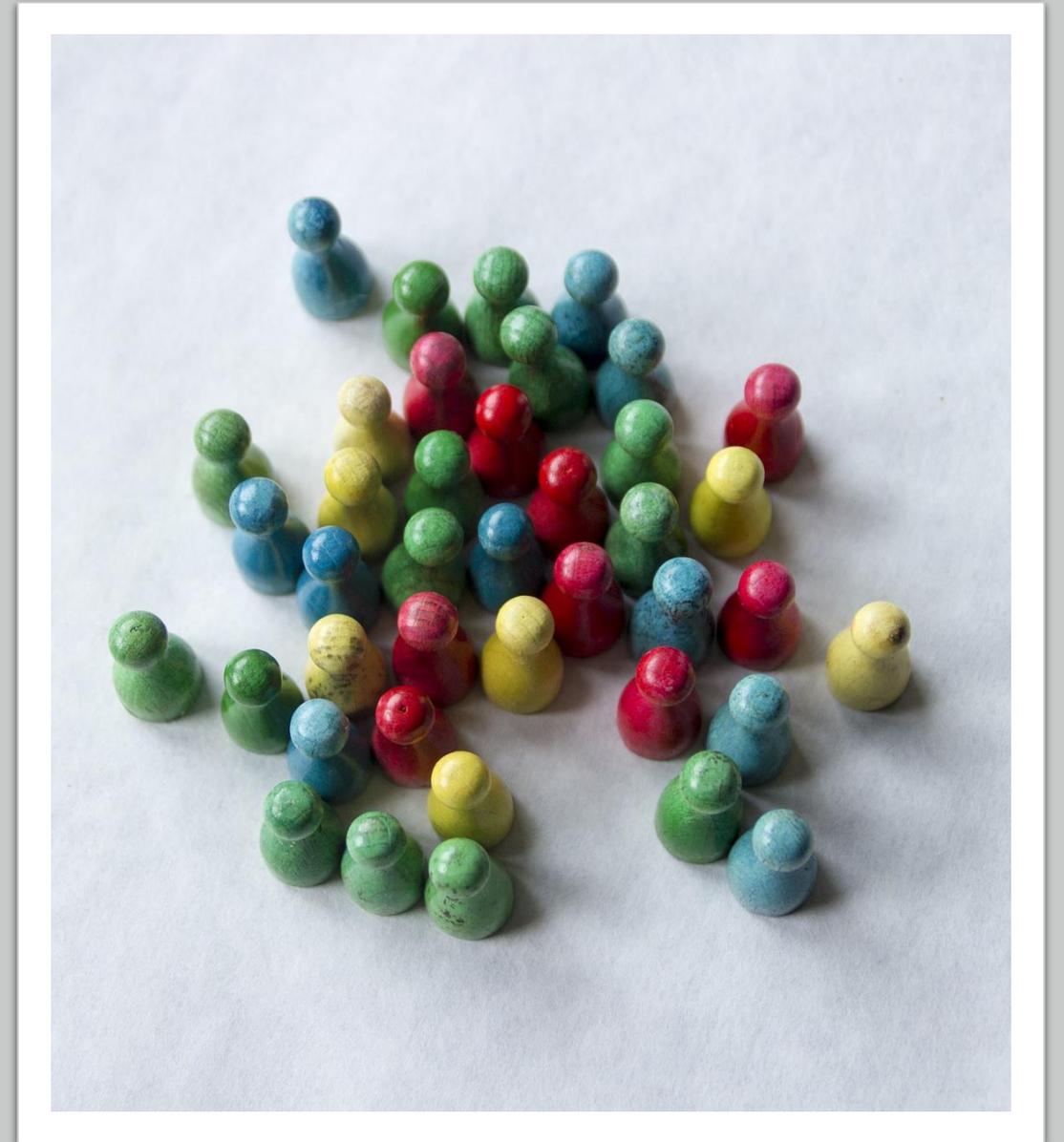
# Connection, relationships and belonging

- Not just physical but social and emotional connection.
  - A critical component of wellbeing and student persistence and retention.
- a) Informal connections
  - b) Interaction and groupwork
  - c) Supporting the skills for groupwork e.g. Theo Gilbert (2017) and the micro-skills of compassion
  - d) Partnership and ownership



# Active Engagement

- Inclusive teaching design and empowering learners
  - a) Strategies for individual and group active learning e.g. flipped classroom approaches;
  - b) Empowerment through partnership and student voice e.g. annotate your syllabus
  - c) Authentic learning, teaching and assessment opportunities



# Key takeaways

- Taking a wellbeing lens to our practice is an opportunity to revisit good pedagogical practice.
- Themes of inclusive teaching, student partnership and student-led teaching complement the three themes of normalising challenge, fostering belonging, and facilitating active engagement.
- Such support for wellbeing counters cultures of competitive individualism that undermine wellbeing. (Gilbert, 2017) and (Kinchin, 2019)



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