

HKU 香港都會大學
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School of Open Learning

Seminar 1
Agile-Blended Learning — An Innovative Pedagogical Approach for Hong Kong

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This talk will cover:

- Why a quest for a new mode of learning
- What adult learners in a metropolis need
- Agile learning and blended learning
- AB learning: benefits and features

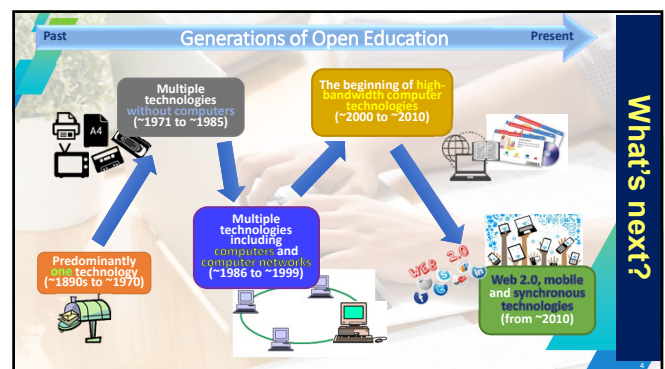
Why a quest for a new mode of learning

Why not “distance learning”?

- The public’s **negative perception** about distance learning
- Doubts about the quality** of distance learning courses

Our quest for a better approach to andragogy (adult learning):

- To **suit contemporary learning needs of adults in metropolises** (especially Hong Kong learners)



Hong Kong learners / metropolitans

- ✓ **High level of readiness for technology use**
 - **High Internet penetration** – Household broadband penetration rate in Hong Kong in 2022 is 98.0%, and Internet usage rate for businesses of all sizes in 2021 was 95.7% (Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, n.d.).
 - **High penetration rate of personal computer** – Percentage of households with PC at home connected to the Internet (with 98.9% via broadband) in 2021 was 75.7% (Census and Statistics Department, 2022). Personal computer penetration rate for businesses of all sizes in 2021 was 81.0% (Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, n.d.).

- **High ownership of mobile devices** – In 2021, 92.9% of persons aged 10 and over had a smartphone. Smartphone was the most popular type of device used for Internet connection at home (99.9%) (Census and Statistics Department, 2022). Mobile subscriber penetration rate in Hong Kong in 2022 is 341.1% (Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, n.d.), showing that each Hong Kong citizen has several mobile devices on average.

- ✓ **Growing need for professional/higher education**
 - **Increasing percentage of working population engaged in professional jobs** – There was an increase in the percentages of workforce engaged as associate professionals and professionals from 2006 to 2016 (from 33.1% to 37.6%) and a drop in percentages of clerical support workers and plant / machine operators and assemblers for the same period from 6.1% to 4.3% (Legislative Council, 2017).
 - **Educational attainment of Internet users** – The rate of using the Internet among citizens having attained post-secondary education in 2021 – 2022 was 99.8%, while for those having attained secondary education was 98.5% (Census and Statistics Department, 2022).

- ✓ **Strong need for spatial and temporal flexibility in learning**
 - **Long working hours** – Hong Kong ranked the third-highest in Asia-Pacific region regarding the number of working hours per week (Instant Office, 2022), under the influence of Asian work values and cultures (Le et al., 2020).
 - In Hong Kong, different **commitments, including job and family commitments**, may influence an adult's learning (Li, 2014). "To help learners cope with the tight schedules of different types of commitments and learning at the same time, flexibility of time and delivery are crucial" (Li, 2014, p. 375).



- ✓ **Preference for self-management of learning**
 - Autonomy or self-regulation is "an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment" (Pintrich, 2000, p. 453).
 - Autonomy and self-regulation is important for adult learning (Barnard et al., 2009; Alvi & Gillies, 2015; Kramarski & Michalsky, 2010).



✓ Collaboration as integral part of curriculum

- Collaborative work facilitates knowledge construction, besides many benefits of team work (Talebizadeh et al., 2021).
- Collaboration is an essential feature in contemporary workplace (Law et al., 2022; Lower, 2022).



Needs of HK learners / metropolitans	Implications for adult education
1. High level of readiness for technology use	High expectations about benefiting from technology use
2. Growing need for professional/higher education	Professional/higher education needed for life-long learning engagement
3. Strong need for spatial and temporal flexibility in learning	Allowing choices of when and where to learn
4. Preference for self-management of learning	Allowing a high degree of learner-autonomy or self-directedness in learning
5. Collaboration in learning	Integrating collaboration for knowledge/skill construction/development



What is agile learning?

Agile learning:

- “applies the processes and principles of agile software development to the context of learning” (Lang, 2017, p. 14)
- serves as “a learning model applying the agile concept/principle of software development lifecycle” (Putra et al., 2019, p. 3)

Characteristics of agile learning

- “Agile learning focuses on **speed** and **flexibility**” (Cognota, n.d.)
- Agile learning aims at learner **autonomy** (Noguera et al., 2015), **independent learning** and **life-long learning** (Chun, 2004), and **working knowledge** or **competence** (Stewart et al., 2009).
- Agile learning emphasizes **collaboration** (Kamat, 2012) and **teamwork** (Noguera et al., 2015) among learners.



- Agile learning involves “**learning mediated by technology**” (Noguera et al., 2018, p. 112).
- The course syllabus of agile learning is “defined in a general way. **Open to modification** to adjust it to students’ motivations, interests and performance” (López-Alcarria et al., 2019, p. 9).
- “... **physical co-location** or **close online collaboration** of all team members” (Bendeck Soto et al., 2021, p. 537) is encouraged in agile learning.
- ‘... students are **self-organized in teams** to co-produce knowledge’ (Salza et al., 2019, p. 33).



- “Agile approaches are particularly suitable for maintaining a **high quality level** and **quickly adjusting to new demands**, e.g. by applying continuous bidirectional feedback” (Tesar & Sieber, 2010, p. 126), “continuous evaluation of students’ performance and course execution” (López-Alcarria et al., 2019, p. 9) and regular learning checks (Parsons & MacCallum, 2019).
- Agile learning emphasizes **reflection on the teaching-learning process** (Lang, 2018; Niculescu et al., 2021)



What is blended learning?

Blended learning is:

- “a heterogeneous mode of teaching and learning that combines **face-to-face (F2F)** and **online modes**” (Rudhumbu, 2022, p. 15)
- “The combination of the internet and digital media with conventional classroom teaching” (Li et al., 2019, p. 100)
- the integration of online learning into the conventional face-to-face instruction and the combination of any two or more learning modes in a study course (Li & Cheung, 2013)




Characteristics of blended learning

- Combines the advantages of both traditional and online approaches (Huang et al., 2022)
- Uses **digitalized teaching and learning materials** (Li, 2014)
- Provides **teacher’s instruction** and facilitates **interaction between peers** in its face-to-face session, with face-to-face sessions offered as a choice for students (Li, 2014)




- Offers **temporal and spatial flexibility in learning**
 - “The online component of blended learning can allow students to learn **anytime** and **anywhere** according to their plan” (Huang et al., 2022, p. 2).
 - Due to its flexibility, “students favored a blended curriculum” in which “they could proceed learning **at their own pace**” (Mshayisa, 2022, p. 9).
 - “... blended learning may provide learners with the **flexibility** to cope with **learner diversity** and facilitate **students to control** their own learning” (Li, 2014, p. 385).




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- **Fosters and enhances collaboration and communication** (Mohamed, 2022)
 - “... varied additional materials provided by blended settings enhance their learning experience and foster a **collaborative learning community**” (Wu & Luo, 2022, p. 3).
 - Blended learning approach “increased opportunities for active and **collaborative learning** without adding to the students’ overall **workload**” (Mshayisa, 2022, p. 8).



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- Enables learners to become more **self-regulated and self-dependent** (Mohamed, 2022) and students can decide on how they engage with the programme, such as “the amount of time dedicated to the programme” (Smyth et al., 2012, p. 466).




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Complementing attributes of agile learning and blended learning

1. Agility

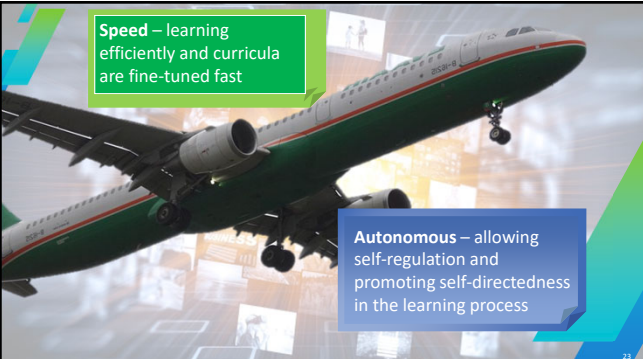
Flexible – learning anywhere, anytime, with any devices/tools that are suitable for the learner and the curriculum



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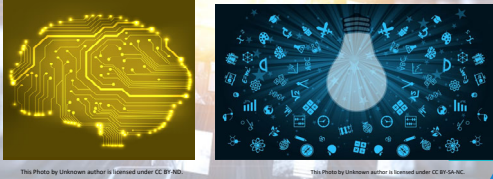
Speed – learning efficiently and curricula are fine-tuned fast

Autonomous – allowing self-regulation and promoting self-directedness in the learning process

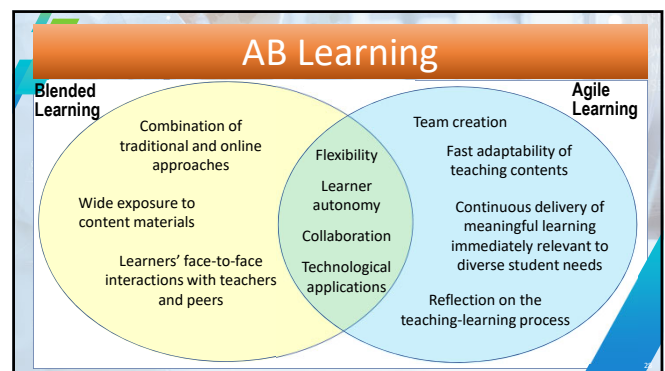
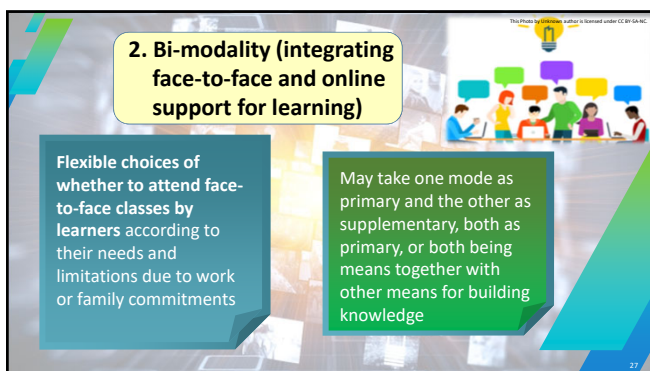


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Use of agile and blended learning in combination creates **self-regulated, independent, motivated life-long learners**



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	Features	Needs of Hongkong learners /Metropolitans
Agile learning	• Team creation for learning opportunities	E
	• Fast adaptability of content materials according to the ever-changing social environment in which students live	B
	• Continuous delivery of meaningful learning that satisfies diverse student learning needs	D
	• Reflection on the teaching-learning process	D
Agile-Blended Learning	• Flexibility - allowing students to learn anywhere, anytime, with any devices/tools that are considered suitable.	C
	• Autonomy - allowing students to self-regulate and self-direct their own learning process.	D
	• Collaboration - promoting a collaborative and interactive learning environment that facilitates student knowledge construction and exchange.	E
	• Technological applications - using diverse teaching and learning materials in digitized form such as hypertexts, videos, audios, 2D/3D visuals, synchronous and asynchronous interactivities.	A
Blended Learning	• A combination of traditional and online approaches	A, C
	• Wide exposure to content materials	B
	• Learners' interactions with teachers and peers	A, E



2. Allowing a **qualitative leap in students' learning effectiveness and learning management** (learning flexibility, collaborative learning, and metacognitive strategy development)



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3. **Flexible provision of support resources for maximum learning results**



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Summary

We need **Agile-Blended (AB) Learning**

- Meets the **diverse needs of adult learners** in **fast-changing Hong Kong and metropolises**
- Offers **temporal and spatial flexibility** in learning
- Emphasizes **curriculum's speedy and flexible adaptability**
- Fosters **learner autonomy**: self-directedness/self-regulation in the learning process
- Allows fast **curriculum fine-tuning** to adapt student needs and fast-changing environment
- Facilitates **collaborative learning**: group work among learners
- Promotes **life-long learning engagement**

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What is an AB Learning course like? For example:

Learning items are tailored to bite-size ones.

Allow learners to build their knowledge through more than one mode of learning.

Allow learners to interact, especially to share their learning products.

Encourage learners to review their progress regularly, for example: Students ask themselves 3 questions every week:

- What have I accomplished in this stage?
- What will I do in the coming stage?
- What facilitate me for more efficient progress?

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Conclusion

Agile-blended learning fits learners in Hong Kong and modern metropolises!

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List of Selected Journals for Publications on Agile-Blended Learning

- [Interactive Technology and Smart Education](#) (ESCI and Scopus listed)
- [International Journal of Mobile Learning and Organisation](#) (Scopus listed)
- “Innovation and Technology in Education” Section of [SN Computer Science](#) (Scopus listed)
- [Computers & Education](#) (Scopus and SSCI listed)
- [Internet and Higher Education](#) (Scopus and SSCI listed)
- [British Journal of Educational Technology](#) (Scopus and SSCI listed)
- [Journal of Computers in Education](#) (Scopus and ESCI listed)
- [Journal of Nursing Education](#) (Scopus and SSCI listed)
- [Nurse Education Today](#) (Scopus and SSCI listed)



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IROPINE Seminar Series
“Innovations in Open and Online Education”

Seminar 2
The COVID Pandemic as a Change Agent in Higher Education

Professor Alan TAIT
Professor Emeritus of Distance Education and Development, The Open University, UK
Fellow, Centre for Distance Education, University of London



21 September 2022



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Seminar 3
Why Innovation is Essential for Open and Digital Learning Institutions — and How to Innovate

Professor Tony BATES
Senior Advisor
The Chang School of Continuing Education
Toronto Metropolitan University
Canada



10 October 2022